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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for measuring student growth in the reading and writing process in order to improve achievement. The targeted population consisted of first- and second-grade students in three sch ols serving two suburban communities, located near a large midwestern city. School enrollment figures were 350, 399, and 669 students. Student, parent, and teacher surveys, teacher observation, and samples of student work documented the problems of curriculum and assessment. The number of responses varied among schools. Analysis of probable cause data revealed students have little or no involvement in curriculum choices and were unfamiliar with methods for self-assessing. According to teachers, traditional methods of teaching were in contrast with methods of instruction that benefit the growth and development of students. Furthermore, traditional evaluation methods assumed that the learning process could be reduced to clear-cut goals and outcomes. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem settings, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention: (1) establishing a child-centered curriculum; and (2) implementing authentic assessment methods. Post-intervention data indicated that performance assessments did improve the teaching of reading and writing. A child-centered curriculum motivated students to learn, and they became more engaged in project-based tasks as demonstrated through metacognitive strategies throughout this intervention. (Contains 18 figures of data and 25 references. Various samples of blank forms and result tabulations, labelled A-Z and AA-CC, are appended.) (Author/CR)

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METHODS FOR MEASURING STUDENT GROWTH

IN

READING AND WRITING

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field-Based Master's Program

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Teachers
Carpenter Elementary
Park Ridge, Illinois

Roosevelt Elementary
Park Ridge, Illinois

Mohawk Elementary
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Action Research Project
Site: Elk Grove , Illinois
Submitted: April 1996

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Abstract

Authors: Mary K. Dunne, Joanne Mulvihill, Terilyn Turner
Site: Elk Grove

Date: April 23, 1996

Title: Measuring Student's Growth in the Reading and Writing Process

This report describes a program for measuring student's growth in the reading and writing process in order to improve achievement. The targeted population consisted of first and second grade students in suburban communities, located near a large Midwestern city. Student, parent, and teacher surveys, teacher observation, and samples of student's work documented the problems of curriculum and assessment . .

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students have little or no involvement in curriculum choices and were unfamiliar with methods for self-assessing. According to teachers, traditional methods of teaching were in contrast with methods of instruction that benefit the growth and development of students. Furthermore, traditional evaluation methods assumed that the learning process could be reduced to clear cut goals and outcomes.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem settings, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention: establishing a child-centered curriculum; and implementing authentic assessment methods.

Post intervention data indicated that performance assessments did improve the teaching of reading and writing. A child-centered curriculum motivated students to learn and they became more engaged in project-based tasks as demonstrated through metacognitive strategies throughout this intervention.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The targeted students' growth in the reading and writing process is limited by current assessment methods. Evidence for the existence of this problem includes: teacher observations, surveys of parents and teachers, and report card samples.

Immediate Problem Context

This action research is being conducted in three schools that serve two separate communities. School A serves community A, and schools B and C serve community B. The communities are geographically proximate.

School A

Targeted school A has an enrollment of 350 students. According to the 1995 School Report Card, the population of the school is 58 percent White, 30 percent Mexican-American, 9 percent Asian, and 3 percent Black. Six percent of the children are from low income families and twelve percent are eligible for bilingual

resources. Ninety-six percent of the students are in daily attendance. When compared with state norms the student mobility rate is in the 25th percentile.

The school is a one story K-6 building built in 1967. It houses two of each grade level plus one classroom for students in a developmental learning program. The class size ranges from 23 to 25 with 23 being the mode. The faculty is composed of 20 full time teachers and 8 shared teachers. There is one special education aide and three inclusion aides along with one shared inclusion facilitator. The staff is composed of one White female principal, one Cuban-American female teacher, and the rest are White female teachers. Teaching experience ranges from1 year to 25 years with the average being 10 years.

The curriculum is in evolution from textbook based to trade book based. New trade book based science and social studies programs are in the planning stages for next year. A new hands on math program was adopted this past year. Reading is in flux with some teachers using basal texts while others are using trade books exclusively, with a readers workshop orientation. Little technology is in evidence. One computer lab with ten IBM computers is available twice a week to every grade level with the exception of kindergarten and first grade. The current reporting system is a traditional graded

A,B,C,D,F report card sent out four times during the year. One mandatory conference with parents is held in the fall.

The Surrounding Community - A

The targeted school is located in a suburban community, 15 miles northwest of a large Midwestern city. It is in a direct flight pattern of a major airport just ten short minutes away. The 1990 census shows the average home value is estimated at $126,000 with a range from $90,000 to $300,000. Sixty-seven percent of the residents own their own home. The average income is $44,474 and the median income is $43,318 per family.

The population is 17,767. Twenty-five percent of the population is under 20, 39 percent is between the ages of 20-39, 23 percent is from 40-64, and 11 percent is over 65. The median age is 32.

Twenty-six percent of the population have less than a 12th grade education. Seventeen percent have a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Eighty-six percent of the population are White, 19 percent are Mexican-American,10 percent are Asian, and less than 1 percent are Black.

The targeted school district serves approximately 2,000 students in four elementary schools and one middle school. The average class size is 24. The average expenditure per student is

$5,579 per year. The ethnic background of the students is 52 percent White, 36 percent Mexican-American,10 percent Asian, and 2 percent Black. Fourteen percent are low income families on welfare, and 24 percent are limited in English proficiency.

The districts' teaching staff includes 118 members. Ninety-five percent are White and five percent are Mexican-American or Cuban-American. Eighty-two percent of the faculty is female. The average teaching experience is 13 years. Seventy percent have a Bachelor's Degree and 30 percent have a Master's Degree or higher. The average salary is $39,553, with a range from $24,300 to $52,185.

The district administration is composed of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent of curriculum, and a business manager. None of these administrators have served more than three years. The average salary of the administration is $74,617. The close proximity of the landing strips of the near-by airport caused the federal government to subsidize soundproofing in all buildings in the district. The district, however, had to match the federal funds, thus depleting the budget. The district has also bought out the contracts of two superintendents in the past five years. All of these variables along with the recent tax cap imposed in the county, has led to financial difficulty in the district.

The district referendum failed in the November election and again in April. As a result, seventeen faculty members have been discharged. All elementary music, physical education, and art has been excluded from the curriculum, eliminating weekly planning times of approximately three and one half to four hours per teacher.

School B

The targeted school has an enrollment of 399 students. According to the 1995 School Report Card, the population of the school is 94 percent White, 3 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander. Children from low income families comprised one percent of the school population while three percent have limited English proficiency. Daily attendance rates for the students is at 95 percent. The students' mobility rate during the school year is four percent. District-wide Special Education sections for Early Childhood, Autistic, Remedial Kindergarten, and Remedial First are housed at School B.

The school is a one story K-6 building built in 1952. It houses three of each grade level and a 3-6 gifted education program. The class sizes range from 20 to 28 with 23 being the average. The faculty is composed of 26 full time teachers and one half-time teacher. There are two special education assistants, a part-time computer assistant, and a library assistant. The staff is composed

of one male principal, three male teachers and the rest are female teachers. Teaching experience ranges from 1 year to 34 years with the average being 11 years. Fifty-two percent of the teachers have a Master's Degree. In addition, teachers regularly engage in professional development activities. The remaining 48 percent of the faculty have between 36 and 90 graduate credit hours from participating in workshops and conferences.

The classes are self-contained in K-5. The sixth grade classes are departmentalized between two teachers. The core curriculum is in evolution from textbook based to trade book based in all subject areas. A new reading program was implemented during the 1994 school year. It is a literature-based program and promotes the reading and writing connection. Social Studies and Health are integrated throughout the reading program. The Social Studies and the Health programs will be under review during the 1995 and 1996 school years.

Math at the primary level (K-2) is a hands-on program that was adopted for the 1995-1996 school year. In grades 3-6 traditional texts are used in math. New programs are being piloted during the 1995 school year in grades 3-6. These levels are piloting hands-on math programs. Some programs are in conjunction with more traditional texts while others are a complete hands-on approach. Science is also a hands-on program from K-6. Individual

themes and kits are rotated throughout the district. Each grade level has a minimum of four units per year. Each unit takes approximately six to eight weeks to complete.

The targeted school is equipped with two computer Writing Labs and a part-time teacher assistant for the lab. The staff is previewing software and studying methods to implement technology into the curriculum. Staff training and education in technology is a multi-year goal for the targeted school.

The current reporting system is a developmental checklist for K-2 and a letter grade report card for grades 3-6. The progress report is sent home to parents three times a year. The teachers currently have one mandatory fall parent conference and one spring conference which can be optional for some students.

Physical education, music, art, gifted education, English as a second language, and library/story time are special programs that are offered throughout the week. Battle of the Books, patrols, and Student Council are extra-curricular activities that are monitored by classroom teachers during the lunch period. After school programs include primary Spanish class, computer exploration, and Junior Great Books. These programs are organized and run by parent organizations.

School C

The targeted school has an enrollment of 669 students according to the 1995 School Report Card. The population of the school is 96 percent White, 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent Mexican-American. Children from low income families comprise less than one percent while students with limited-English proficiency comprise three percent of the population. Ninety-six percent of the students are in daily attendance. The students' mobility rate during the school year is three percent.

The faculty is composed of 42 full time teachers, 12 teacher assistants, and a full-time computer assistant. The staff is composed of four White male teachers and the rest are White female teachers. Twenty-nine percent of the teachers have a Master's Degree. Teachers regularly engage in professional development activities. Twenty-six percent of the teachers have 90 hours over their Bachelor's Degree. Teaching experience ranges from 1 year to 25 years with the average being 11 years. The school is administered by a female principal and a male assistant principal. A School Leadership Team (SLT) is also in place to address issues related to the school learning climate. School learning climate is defined as attitudinal and behavioral patterns in a school that impact the level of student achievement. Representatives from each

unit team serve as members of the SLT. Unit teams are grade level, and subject area teams.

The school is a three story K-6 building built in 1928. It houses multiples of each grade level, four instructional resource classrooms, and a 3-6 gifted education program. The class size ranges from 20 to 28 with 23 being the average.

The core curriculum is in evolution from textbook based to trade book based. A new reading program was implemented during the 1994 school year. It is a literature-based program and promotes reading and writing connections. Science and math at the primary level are hands-on programs. The social studies program is currently under review. The curriculum offers physical education, music, art, gifted education, and English as a second language. Support services include one social worker, two speech pathologists, and four instructional resource teachers. The school is equipped with a computer lab and a full-time teacher assistant for the lab.

The current reporting system is a developmental checklist for K-2 and a letter grade report card for grades 3-6. The progress report is sent home to parents three times a year. The teachers currently have one mandatory parent conference in the fall and one optional conference in the spring.

The Surrounding Community - B and C

The targeted schools B and C are conveniently located in a suburb of a large Midwestern city. It is a quiet residential community with little industry. The average home value is estimated at $185,000 with a range from $90,000 to an excess of $500,000. The community is made up of mostly single-family dwellings and 84 percent of the population own their own home. The population of this wooded, park-like community is 36,175. The average income is $69,775 and the median income is $52,817 per household.

This community has seen a change in its composition and population distribution over the last 10 years. The 1990 census shows that 20 percent of the general population is under 20, 26 percent is between 20-39, 33 percent is between 40-64, and 19 percent is over 65. The median age is 41.

The general population is well-educated with 42 percent having a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Twenty-four percent have a high school diploma and six percent of the population have less than a grade school education. Ninety-seven percent of the population is White, two percent is Asian/Pacific Islander, and one percent is Hispanic.

The targeted school district serves approximately 3,323 students in five elementary schools and one junior high school. The average class size is 22. The ethnic background of the students is

95 percent White, 4 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 1 percent Hispanic, and less than 1 percent are Black or Native Americans. Low income families comprise one percent and four percent are limited in English proficiency.

The teaching and administrative staff includes 222 members who are 99 percent White and 1 percent Black. Eighty-five percent of the faculty is female while 15 percent are male. Fifty percent have a Bachelor's Degree and 50 percent have a Master's Degree or higher. The average teaching experience is 12 years. Salaries range from $28,355 to $59,312 with the average teaching salary being $45,172. The salary range of the administrative staff is from $62,000 to $110,000 with the average salary being $83,037.

All residents pay taxes to three school districts: an elementary district, high school district, and a junior college district. All school districts are governed alike in that their respective boards are elected by the public on staggered terms and are charged with full power to provide a sufficient number of schools and to operate these schools and levy taxes to support them.

The school board selects the superintendent who then selects the administrative staff. All staff hirings and firings need the approval of the school board. The administrative staff of the targeted district has undergone many changes. Some changes were due to the retirement of key personnel. Other changes were due to

the realignment of the administrative office by a new superintendent in 1990. The positions of Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Core Coordinators, Personnel Director, and Finance Director have undergone major changes. While the Personnel Director has been replaced, the offices of Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum Director, and Core Coordinators have been realigned. The superintendent has replaced coordinator positions with curriculum specialists and consultants. These positions are now part-time positions. The Curriculum Director position has been made into two positions. One position is Art, Music, P.E., Technology, Staff Development and the other position is Language Arts (Reading, Writing, English, Spelling), Social Studies, Health, Science, Math, and Staff Development. The reassignment of administrative staff has created an imbalance in the structure of the district. The school board has addressed this problem by employing a new superintendent for the 1995-1996 school year.

The targeted district has recently developed goals for the future. These goals are referred to as the Planning Together for Tomorrow (PTT). The PTT goals deal with visions for the life-long learner. Some of the goals deal with restructuring, communication, and technology. Each school in the targeted district is studying these goals and is discussing and planning ways to work toward them. This will take time, work, and agreement between the parents, the

community at-large, and the school community. There will need to be changes in curriculum, methods, scheduling, and ways of thinking. Some PTT goals will require increased revenue.

The district is currently operating in the black. Increased enrollments have necessitated additions for all five elementary buildings. The final phase of this project will be September, 1995. The attention will then turn to the need for increased space at the junior high level. Within the next two or three years, the junior high will be unable to house the number of students that will enter.

Many options are now being discussed. Two of the most popular options are building a new middle school or updating and modernizing some presently owned facilities. The district relies very heavily on the taxes from this residential community. The state legislature has implemented tax caps which will make it necessary to seek a referendum for future operating costs. The community is resistant to any increases in property taxes and already feels that $7,244 per pupil expenditure is excessive.

Regional and National Context of Problem

If the primary purpose in educating is to nourish active, independent learners who will become life-long learners, then the traditional methods of measurement such as report cards and standardized test results are simply inadequate. Teaching methods

and philosophy have changed causing teachers to look at other methods of measurement. The focus of instruction in reading and writing has changed from words to thoughts; isolated skills to context strategies; separate reading and writing instruction to integrated reading and writing instruction.

"Often, many of the required evaluation procedures we teachers are asked to follow do not match with the way we teach and, therefore, do not serve the teacher's needs or the children's best interest." (Routman, 1988, p. 203).

Teachers having been held accountable by parents, administrators, and boards of education, tend to stay with the conventional mode of evaluation because it is safe. Routman believes evaluation should be consistent with the way children have been taught. It is crucial to review, revise, and articulate beliefs about teaching and learning before beginning to assess and evaluate learning. Evaluation involves collecting data and making judgments based on the students' method of learning. Students need to engage in tasks and activities that are worthwhile and important to the student. Tasks used for assessment need to fit the curriculum and the student's method of learning.

"Pencil and paper tests simply cannot capture young children's developing and understanding of oral and written language, and their growing concepts about the world around them. Primary teachers

must be able to observe and evaluate their young children's emerging competencies in order to support a child's next steps." (Hill and Ruptic, 1994, p. 64).

Avery (1993) believes tests provide limited information about a "moment in time." Test results are subject to influence by many factors such as last night's sleep and this morning's breakfast. Evaluation is an ongoing process. It is not an activity that occurs after a test, a project, or at the end of a marking period. It is an integral part of the teaching and learning process that guides the teacher in making daily decisions about instruction.

True assessment must serve more than school accountability. It must acknowledge that no one type of assessment can measure the growth of a student. The traditional methods of measurement provide information about a moment in time not the development and growth of a student.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

As stated in Chapter 1, if the primary purpose in educating is to nourish active, independent learners who will become life-long learners, then the traditional methods of measurement such as report cards and standardized test results are simply inadequate.

Data Collection

School policy at School A requires a traditional graded A,B,C,D,F report card sent out four times during the year. One mandatory conference with parents is held in the fall. School B and School C, according to District policy, use a developmental checklist for grades K-2. This progress report is sent home to parents three times a year. One mandatory fall parent conference is held with an optional spring conference.

In July, letters were sent to parents informing them of a research project that was being conducted by their child's teacher. The researchers surveyed parents about the means used to inform

them about their child's reading and writing progress. The researchers were attempting to discover if parents felt they were given enough information about their child's growth in reading and writing. The researchers then turned to teachers for information. To gain input on changes in instructional and assessment methods, surveys were also sent to teachers. In August, the teacher and parent surveys were analyzed. From September through January, observations, reading and writing samples, and individual conferencing, will be used to document growth in the reading and writing process. The number of responses received varied from school to school.

Parents were asked to reflect on the information that they received from the report card and from conferences. As a result of the survey given to parents of former students, charts were developed by the teachers/researchers to analyze parent input from all three sites. Question 2 and question 4 covered writing while question 1 and question 3 dealt with reading. (Appendix A) .

Do you feel the information about your child's writing progress from his/her teacher was:

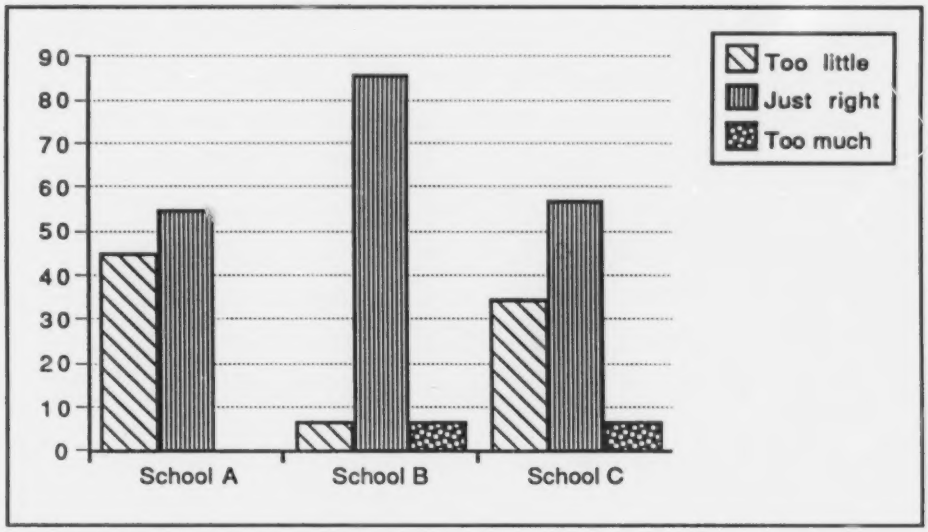

Figure 1

Parent Responses to Question 2 (Appendix X)

Did the report card help you see your child's growth in writing last year?

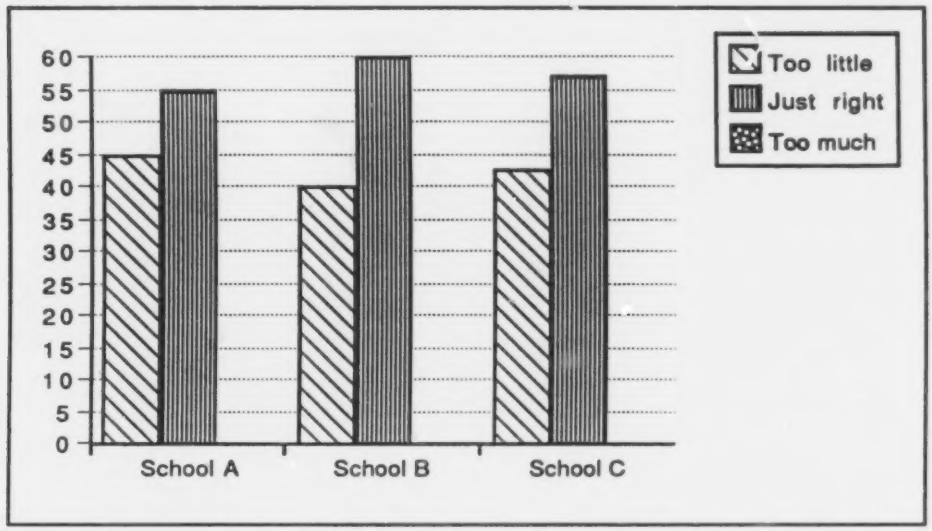

Figure 2

Parent Responses to Question 4 (Appendix X)

At all three schools, parents indicated they needed more information about the child's writing progress. Over forty percent of the parents at each site felt the report card did not provide enough information about the child's growth in writing. Parents were more comfortable when they could compare samples of writing. This data indicated that parents received more information about their child's growth in writing through conferencing with the teacher rather than referring to a report card or progress report.

Do you feel the information about your child's reading progress from his/her teacher was?

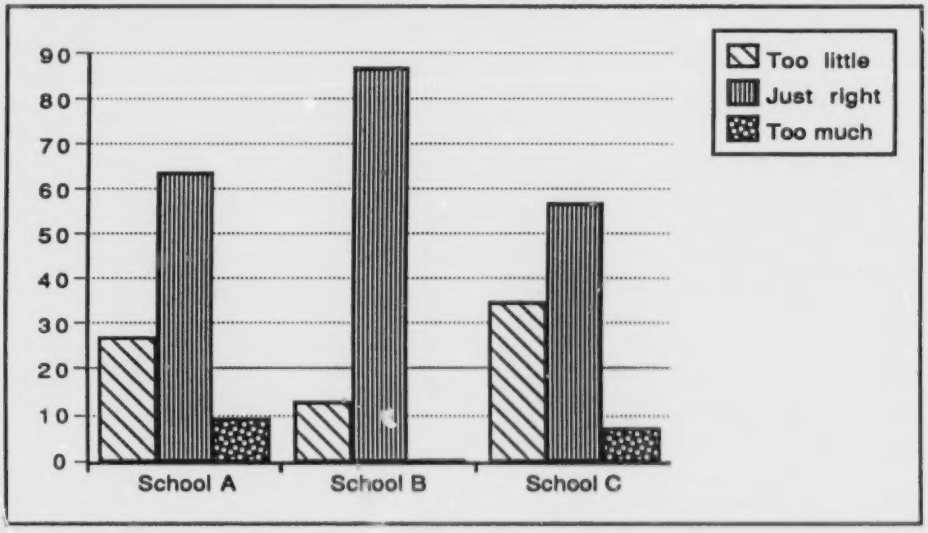

Figure 3

Parent Responses to Question 1 (Appendix X)

Did the report card help you see your child's growth in reading last year?

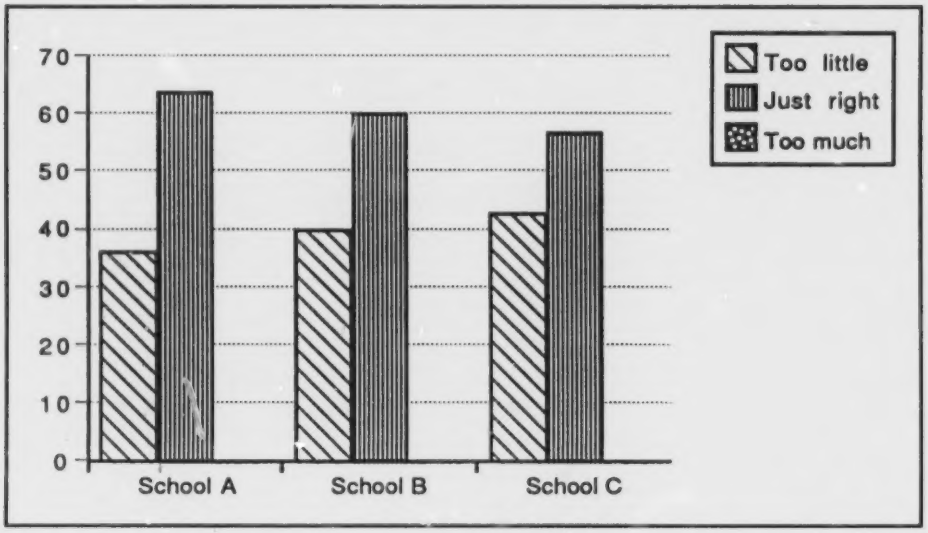

Figure 4

Parent Responses to Question 3

In reading, thirty-six percent or more at each site showed the same feeling of inadequate reporting of growth on the report card. When a child reads to a parent they can see growth. A letter grade only shows a 'moment in time' not a child's growth. Parents commented that if they do not know age appropriate expectations then "it is difficult to make sense of the information" on a report card or progress report. According to one parent from site A, "...your comments written on the report card were much more meaningful to us than his grades because they told... the progress he made during

each quarter." Another comment on the survey noted that an "A as a grade doesn't necessarily show a child's progress," (S. Luhrs, personal communication, July 5, 1995).

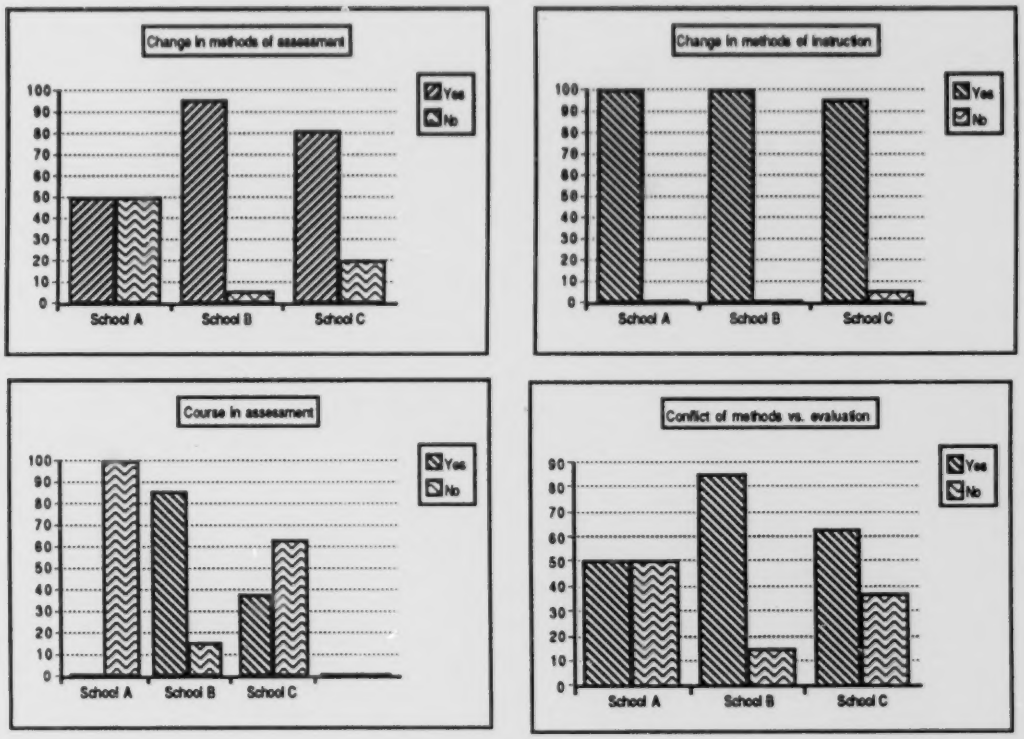

Figure 5

Teacher Survey Results (Appendix Y)

A teacher survey was developed to determine changes in methods of instruction as well as changes in methods of assessment. The researchers had a response rate of fifty-nine percent of the teachers surveyed. School A received eight responses

out of twenty-two surveys sent. School B received eighteen responses out of twenty-two surveys. School C received fifteen surveys out of thirty surveys sent. While teachers have kept informed about the changes in the methods of instruction, the same is not true of keeping informed about the changes in assessment. (Appendix C)

It appears that the teachers who responded are in some flux of change. Ninety-eight percent of the teachers responding have changed their methods of instruction. Eighty-two have changed their methods of assessment. Fifty-two percent have taken courses in assessment. Seventy percent feel there is a conflict between methods and evaluation.

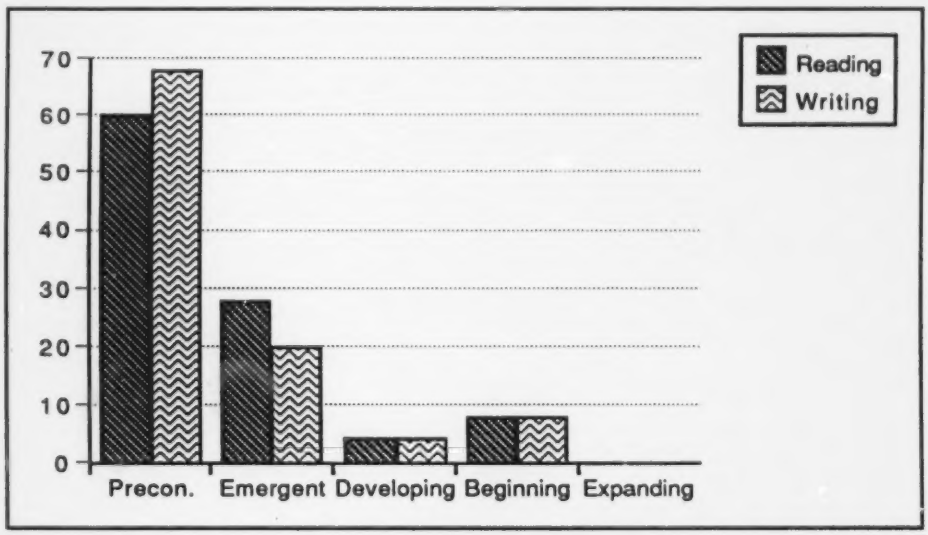

Figure 6

September Placement of Students from School A on the Reading and Writing Continuum (Appendix Z)

Analysis of the graph illustrates that at School A the majority of first grade students are unable to recognize letters and sounds of the alphabet. Some use pictures and print to convey meaning, while others have difficulty with this task. Many pretend to read and write, however, most do not see themselves as readers and writers.

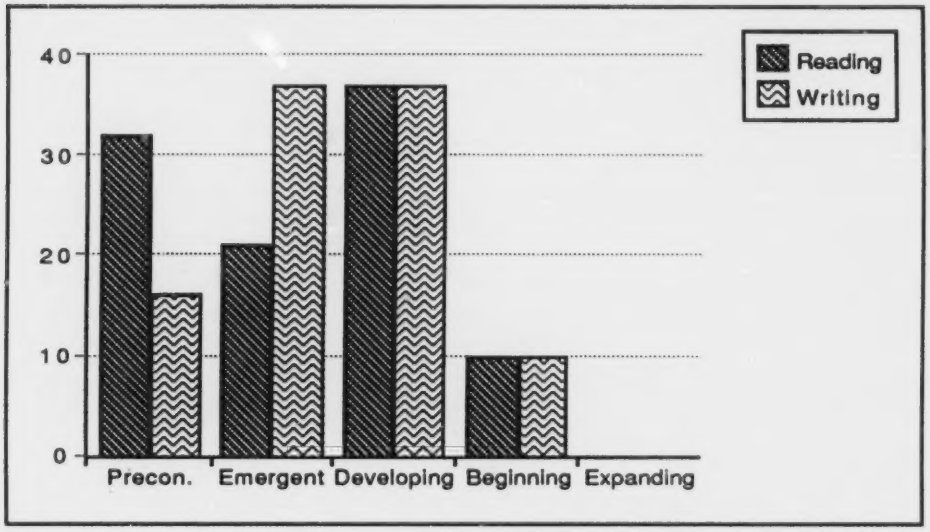

Figure 7

September Placement of Students from School B

on the Reading and Writing Continuum (Appendix Z)

The majority of students in School B are at the emergent reading and writing stage. They are using letters and pictures to convey meaning. They see themselves as readers and writers. They

are beginning to make a connection between the reading and writing processes.

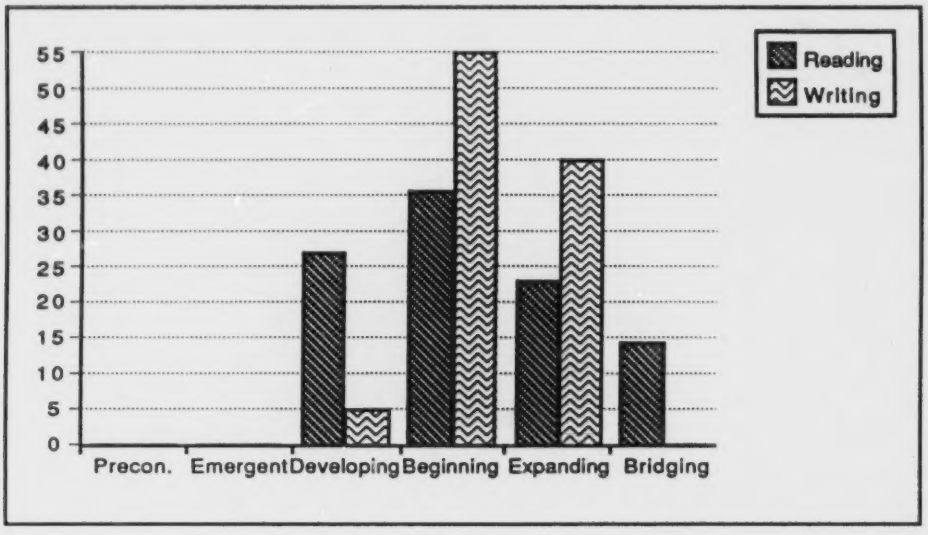

Figure 8

September Placement of Students from School C on the Reading and Writing Continuum (Appendix Z)

Students in School C see themselves as writers rather than readers. They are comfortable with choosing their own topics. They are beginning to choose appropriate books. Connections are being made between reading, writing, and everyday experiences.

Probable Cause Site-based

Community A

The obstacles faced in Community A can be linked to the low

socioeconomic conditions. The primary needs of the family takes precedence over the needs of the school community. Parents work to provide for the necessities. Consequently, the home-school connection takes a backseat to the basic needs of the family. Few children have previous school experiences. As a result of these obstacles, parents do not understand their role in their child's education. This places an extra burden on the teacher to understand the cultural background of the children they are working with, and how this background relates to individual educational needs. Teachers need to keep abreast of issues and methods which will create a successful learning environment for each child. Currently in Community A, teacher morale is low due to a failed referendum resulting in detrimental cuts to programs.

Community B

In contrast, parents in Community B take an active part in their child's education. Parent expectations for the school and the child are high. There is a balance between the home and school. Communication between the home and school is frequent. Parents are willing to be educated in new methods. However, there is some comfort with traditional practices because parents are familiar with grades. They are hesitant to accept methods which show individual growth rather than comparison of a child's progress with

classmates. Consequently, the community is in a period of adjustment and education. This period of adjustment can be uncomfortable for the parent, child, and teacher.

Conclusion

Students in the targeted first and second grade classrooms have little or no involvement in curriculum choices. They are reproducing the knowledge of other's resulting in unclear goals and expectations. Consequently, students are unable to take charge of their own learning.

Teacher roles have changed. They are facilitators and no longer the sole provider of knowledge for students. Traditional practices of instruction are in contrast with methods of instruction that benefit the growth and development of students. The current teaching philosophy in the targeted schools is in direct conflict with the current methods of evaluation. Current methods of evaluation also encourage competition for grades in the community and foster feelings of inadequacies by focusing on what the student is unable to achieve rather than achievements.

Since the community and school district use these tools as a means for measuring the success of the school and the teacher, teachers experience anxiety and frustration over having to reduce their vast knowledge of each student into a single notation or comment on a report. Parents make sense of a test score or a report

card grade or comment based on their own schooling, history, beliefs and values, and as a result, misinterpret information about their child.

Probable Cause Literature Based

The literature confirms that if the primary purpose in educating is to nourish active, independent learners who will become life-long learners, then the traditional methods of measurement such as report cards and standardized test results are simply inadequate. According to Grady (1992), "Student performance, teacher observation and evaluation, self-assessment, and standardized scores all shed light on a student's learning profile. We know there are many ways to learn. It is time we applied that tenet to evaluation of students" (p. 11). Participation in authentic tasks is more likely to motivate students to sustain the hard work that learning requires (Newmann, 1991. p. 31).

Once a teacher develops a personal grading scheme, they still face the dilemma of how different audiences will interpret the grades (Seeley, p. 5). According to British Colombia Dept of Education, (1991) by focusing on what children could not do, teachers learned that it undermined the confidence of many children. By not allowing students to become involved in the curriculum, students doubted their ability to learn. Traditional assessment

methods gave limited views of what children could do and did not encourage the development of self-evaluation skills. Through traditional methods we often overlooked the student as the developing learner.

Over the past 30 years, there have been many changes in the way in which reading is conceptualized and defined; standardized tests, however, have remained relatively impervious to these new concepts and definitions. According to Pearson and Stallman (1993), " We have developed an accountability mentality for evaluating the education system, and opinion polls indicate consistently that the general public believes that standardized test scores are the best indicators of the quality of education children are receiving" (p. 6).

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

As stated in Chapter 1, the targeted students' growth in the reading and writing process is limited by current assessment methods. According to Hodges' research (1992), early reading assessments have not kept pace with advances in reading research, theory, and practice. "One of the biggest mistakes we make is the order in which we design the components of the education system. First, we set up an organizational structure; next, we plan the curriculum to fit the structure; and finally we choose criteria for student success" (Newman, 1991, p.30).

Students do not accumulate skills and facts in a neat and orderly fashion. Researchers recognize that there is a wide diversity in the pace and style of development among children and cultures (Grady, 1992). All students enter school at their readiness level and need to be instructed wherever they happen to be in the developmental literacy process.

> We must create educational environments that nurture and trust children as natural learners, that foster collaboration and the notion of community, while building on the uniqueness of individuality-educational environments that are responsive to the diverse interests and learning preferences of individuals and groups of children (Traill, 1993, p. 2).

A curriculum committed to independent learning is built on inquiry. Inquiry values the ability to recognize problems and to generate multiple and diverse methods in trying to solve them. Inquiry changes the role for the students. It emphasizes different processes. It promotes problem finding and problem solving as goals for all students in the educational community. It encourages questions and invites students to find multiple solutions (IRA, 1994). Inquiry based curriculum requires a shift in attitude, an altered perspective on curriculum. "A major part of the change is recognizing that curriculum does not have to be developed in detail before students get involved. Learners must be integral contributors to the decision-making process, not passive sideliners waiting to implement someone else's best laid plans" (Crafton, 1991, p. 59).

Crafton (1991) further stated that a natural result of an inquiry-based curriculum would be integrating the language arts and the content areas through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Students take individual and communal responsibility for their learning. They must take risks. Students are encouraged to develop their interest and strengths (Schultz,1994). They become actively engaged in curriculum choices. In essence, they are taking charge of their own learning. De Fina (1992) has noted that "In recent years, whole language classrooms have begun to replace the traditional classroom because an emphasis on the curriculum has been replaced by an emphasis on the child" (p. 52). Process, content, the learner, materials and teachers all become part of the curriculum. Inquiry-based curriculum changes the role of the teacher from that of keeper of the knowledge to that of facilitator of learning experiences. This shift in theory and practice has important implications for assessment (Pearson, 1993).

Often the required evaluation procedures teachers are asked to follow do not match the ways they teach and, therefore, do not meet the teacher's need or the student's best interests. Routman (1988) suggested we need to incorporate informal and ongoing procedures of evaluation as well as more traditional ones, and students need to be evaluated in relation to themselves. Where the student was last month, where is he now, and where we expect him to be next month should be foremost on our minds. "Always, the total child needs to be looked at and we need to be asking, is the

curriculum fitting the child? If not, we need to adjust it to meet the child's needs" (p. 203).

Ruptic (1992) stated that the ongoing assessment of student progress, meaningful evaluation of that progress, and reporting in a manner which communicates clearly between school staff, students, and parents were critical components of successful educational programs. As far as she was concerned, evaluation must be centered in the classroom and tied directly to the curriculum. Reporting must reflect an educational program that teaches the whole child, preparing the student to function in a rapidly changing world.

Grady (1992) thought the portfolio assessment approach could be the format needed for this philosophy. Student performance, teacher observation and evaluation, self-assessment, and standardized scores all shed light on the students' learning profile.

According to Routman (1991) a program "needs to fit the student, rather that trying to fit the student into a predesigned program" (p. 14). She surmised evaluation should be relevant, authentic, and part of the teaching-learning process to further instruction. Her foremost goal of evaluation was self-evaluation which was the analysis of one's own attitudes and processes so that one can use the information to promote continued growth and learning. She saw the portfolio as a vehicle to exhibit student work over time. This allowed the students to be at the center of the

assessment process through their reflective decision making about its contents.

DeFina (1992), Sullivan (1995), and Clemmens, Laase, Cooper, Areglade, and Dill (1993), all agreed that portfolio assessment was a systematic, purposeful, and meaningful way to collect student works. Portfolios ask us to look at learning in the context of the whole child and to see performance as one part of learning. Portfolios document individual student performances, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences. "Portfolios and portfolio assessment mirror the actual processes in which children are engaged as they develop their reading and writing abilities" (DeFina, 1992, p. 47).

Portfolios as viewed by Clemmens, et al. (1993), are developmental pictures of students' progress. They allow students, teacher, parents, and administrators to understand a students' progress as no other method of assessment can. The value of portfolios are multifaceted. Portfolio assessment supports whole language, process writing, integrated curriculum, and collaborative learning (Grady, 1992).

However, as Freppon (1992) and Grady (1992) have noted, portfolio-based assessment has other effects that make this form of evaluation educationally sound. First, students have a vested interest in the creation of their portfolio. Most of the contents of the portfolio are actual pieces of student work, not approximations

supplied by the score on a standardized test. Actual work samples help to monitor progress and shape instruction in accord with learner's response. Second, assessment is an important part of the learning cycle rather than being merely a result. Ideally, students look at their work over time and make reflective decisions about what might go into their classroom portfolios. Thus, students are at the center of the assessment process. Performance-based assessment lets students and teachers know exactly what needs exist. Students receive immediate feedback, gain confidence by acknowledgment of their strengths, and gain insight into how to improve. Continued student examination, discussion, and reflection of portfolios encourage growth in the learning process. Consequently, students move from passive to active learners.

Portfolios reflect an "educational program that teaches the whole child, preparing the student to function in a rapidly changing world" (Ruptic, 1992, p. 7). Within students' portfolios you can see concepts they're learning, the thinking processes they're employing, the organization of their thoughts and the problem-solving skills they're using. Just as important, portfolios empower students to be active participants in their own evaluation and learning.

The foremost goal of evaluation is self-evaluation, that is the analysis of our own attitudes and processes so that we can use the information to promote continued growth and learning. The purpose

of self-evaluation is the purpose of education: to enable an individual to function independently, intelligently and productively (Routman, 1991, p. 342).

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

> As a result of a child-centered curriculum used during the period of September, 1995 through January, 1996, the targeted first and second grade students will show growth in the reading and writing process as measured by reading and writing continuums, samples of student's work, and student and parent surveys.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. A time line will be created to collect student's work,
2. A student's attitude survey will be compiled,
3. A parent's attitude survey will be compiled,
4. Reading workshop will be instituted in the classroom,
5. Writing workshop will be instituted in the classroom,
6. A reading continuum will be adapted,
7. A writing continuum will be adapted.

As a result of using authentic assessment during the period of September,1995 through January, 1996, the targeted first and second grades will show growth in reading and writing as measured by surveys, portfolios, rubrics, and student reflections and journals.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Create a survey to measure student's attitude about reading,
2. Create a survey to measure student's attitude about writing,
3. Initiate a plan to for instructing students in self-reflection,
4. Rubrics for reading and writing will be developed,
5. Implement portfolios in the classroom.

Action Plan for the Intervention

I. Gather Information for Action Research Project.

A. Develop and distribute parent information for Action Research Project.

1. A survey will be developed to discover the attitude of parents of former students toward the current assessment methods. This will be sent in July with response expected by August. (Appendix A)
2. Parent Portfolio Letter will be sent the first week of school so that parents are informed of the

assessment method that will be used during the 1995-1996 school year. (Appendix B)

3. Parent Night which is held the first month of school will be a time to inform parents about the curriculum and the means of assessing each child's growth.

a) Prepare a parent education packet which includes:

(1) a checklist on How to help a child learn to read. (Appendix D)

(2) an article from Teaching K-8, Learning to Read at Home (Appendix E)

(3) a parent survey on reading at home (Appendix F)

(4) a handout on Home-School Strategies (Appendix G)

B. Gather collegial information

1. A teacher survey will be administered to discover the attitude of colleagues toward the current assessment methods. This will be sent early in the school year. (Appendix C)

C. Gather student information

1. A student reading attitude survey will determine a

baseline of students' attitudes toward reading. This will be completed in September. (Appendix H)

2. A student writing attitude survey will determine a baseline of students' attitudes toward writing. This will be completed in September. (Appendix I)
3. A Familiarity with Reading and Writing Inventory will determine the baseline of students' literacy. This will be completed in September. (Appendix J)

II. Implementation of reading and writing procedures in the classroom.

A. A 'We Noticed' reflection dialogue between the child, teacher, and the parents will be implemented on a monthly basis. (Appendix K)

B. Implementing teacher participation in reading and writing procedures in the classroom.

1. A reading continuum will show all students growth throughout the 1995-1996 school year. This will be done in September, November, and January. (Appendix L)
2. A writing continuum will show all students' growth throughout the 1995-1996 school year. This will be done in September, November, and January. (Appendix L)

3. Zaner-Bloser Literacy Framework to be used with the continuums. (Appendix M)
4. Spelling Stages Test will be administered in October and January to show the developmental stages of writing of the individual student. (Appendix N)

C. Implementing student participation in reading and writing procedures in the classroom.

1. A writing sample will be done monthly. The topic will be selected by the child.
2. Self Portraits will document growth in a child's self-perception. This will be done by the child in September and January. (Appendix O)
3. An oral or video tape of students reading will be done in September and January.
4. Journal entries will be made several times weekly.
5. A 'We Noticed' reflection dialogue between the child, teacher, and the parents will be implemented on a monthly basis. (Appendix K)

III. Develop means for evaluating growth in the reading and writing process.

A. Implement parent involvement in the evaluation process.

1. A parent survey will evaluate the portfolio process. (Appendix P)
2. Parent feedback will be compiled by:
    a) A 'We Noticed' reflection dialogue for both taped reading and writing samples. (Appendix K)
    b) A parent survey will be sent to discover the attitude of parents toward the current assessment methods. This will be sent in January. (Appendix A)
3. Portfolio Night will be held in January so that parents and students celebrate the students' growth.

B. Implementing teacher involvement in the evaluation process.

1. A reading continuum will show each individuals' growth throughout the 1995-1996 school year. This will be done in September, November, and January. (Appendix L)
2. A writing continuum will show each individuals' growth throughout the 1995-1996 school year. This will be done in September, November, and January. (Appendix L)

3. Familiarity with Reading and Writing Inventory to determine growth of students' literacy. This will be updated in January. (Appendix J)
4. Spelling Stages Test will be administered in October and January to evaluate the developmental stages of writing of the individual student. (Appendix N)
5. Anecdotal Records will document changes in reading and writing throughout the year.
6. Monthly conferencing in reading and writing will guide students in self-reflection and help define the needs of the student.
7. Parent and Teacher Conferences allow an exchange of information that will benefit the growth and development of the student.

C. Students will participate in the evaluation process.

1. Students' portfolios will show growth in the reading and writing process.
    a) A writing sample will be done monthly. The topic will be selected by the student.
    b) Self-portraits will document growth of a students self-perception. This will be done

by the student in September and January. (Appendix O)

c) An oral or video tape of students reading will be done in September and January.

d) A "We Noticed" reflection dialogue between the student, teacher, and parents will be included.

e) A "Fix-it" strategy will allow the student to demonstrate growth in the writing process. This will be implemented in November and January.

f) A "Tag-it" strategy allows the student to develop the skills needed for self-reflection. This will be implemented on a monthly basis. (Appendix Q)

2. Attitude surveys will be given to the students.

a) Student Reading Attitude Survey to show changes in the students' attitudes toward reading. This will be completed in January. (Appendix H)

b) Student Writing Attitude Survey to show change in the students' attitudes toward

writing. This will be completed in January. (Appendix I)

3. Portfolio Night will be held in January so that parents and students can celebrate the students' growth.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, reading and writing continuums will be developed. In addition, portfolios of student work in both reading and writing will be kept throughout the intervention period. Attitude surveys of parents and students, observational logs, and student's work samples will be kept as part of the assessment process.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

One objective of this project was to establish a child-centered room which would allow growth in the reading and writing process as measured by reading and writing continuums, samples of student's work, and student and parent surveys. The development of a child-centered room using integrated curriculum led to the creation of a time line for reflecting on students work with students and parents. Parent and student surveys, monthly self-reflections, a reading and writing continuum were selected to effect the desired changes.

A second objective of this project was to use authentic assessment to show growth in reading and writing. Student journals and reflections, and parent and student surveys, were selected to measure the effect of the desired changes. A portfolio, containing the assessment tools of surveys, continuums, rubrics, writing samples, and self-reflections, was the instrument used to organize the student's work.

This intervention examines the process of establishing a child-centered curriculum and a child-centered classroom so the child will show growth in reading and writing. The classroom management and procedures for measuring the growth of the child were altered to effect change in the way we record, report, and measure children's growth. This study attempted to answer the following questions? Do children understand what they are learning? Do children see the growth that they are making in the reading and writing process? Can we allow children to take ownership for their learning? Do we give the child a voice in the acquisition of knowledge? Do the parent's fully understand the learning style of their child? Has the child's attitude changed about learning? Have the parent's attitude changed concerning their understanding of their child's growth in the reading and writing process?

In July, letters were sent to parents informing them of a research project that was being conducted by their child's teacher. The researchers surveyed parents about the means used to inform them about their child's reading and writing progress. (Appendix A) The researchers then turned to teachers for information to gain input on changes in instructional and assessment methods. As stated in Chapter 2, the researchers discovered that teachers have kept informed about the changes in the methods of instruction. However, teachers have not kept as informed about the changes in assessment.

(Appendix B) Using the information from both of these surveys enabled the teachers/researchers to determine the needs of the teachers and parents.

Baseline information for students needed to be established early in September. Therefore, a parent portfolio letter was sent home followed by a Parent Curriculum Night. Parent education packets were distributed and explained at that time. Concurrently, student Reading and Writing Attitude Surveys, self-portraits, and a diagnostic spelling test were conducted in the classroom. As the year progressed, observations, reading and writing samples, and individual conferencing were used to document growth on a reading and writing continuum.

Three weeks into the intervention, establishing a baseline at the beginning of the school year proved to be difficult. Observations of group functioning led the teachers/researchers to conclude the students needed a longer period of adjustment. The needs of students prevented the teacher/researcher from working with students individually. An overabundance of forms and bookkeeping proved to be difficult for the teachers/researchers to implement so early in the school year. The time line was altered. A late October date for completion of forms was established. This alteration of the time line allowed students to become more acclimated with the classroom routine. The teacher/researcher found that the

adjustment of the time line needed to be continuous throughout the intervention. The elimination of some assessment forms needed to be reviewed also. The teacher/researcher found that duplications were apparent and consequently eliminated the Emergent Writing form and the Parent Reading and Writing Attitude Survey.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

School A

In July of 1995, the teacher/researcher surveyed parents about the means used to inform them about their child's reading and writing progress. (Appendix A) The surveys were placed in self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Of the twenty surveys sent, eleven were returned. In August, a teacher survey was distributed to all K-6 teachers in School A. Eight of twenty-two were returned. (Appendix C)

A parent portfolio letter was sent home with the children in early September followed by Curriculum Night held September 6th. (Appendix B) At this time parent education packets were distributed. (Appendix D,E,G) Curriculum night was attended by eleven of twenty-eight families invited into the classroom. The portfolio concept was explained in detail along with the continuums to be used throughout the year.

Since this was the beginning of first grade, the teacher/researcher found it was difficult for the students to work independently. With the help of a teacher on special assignment, the teacher/researcher administered the Student Reading Attitude Survey and the Student Writing Attitude Survey. (Appendix H, I) Children were interviewed one to one. The same assistance was required when implementing the Familiarity with Reading and Writing Survey to each student. (Appendix J) This survey was found to be a repetition of the Reading and Writing Continuum and so was eliminated. (Appendix L)

In late September the class drew their fall self-portrait. (Appendix O) The first Diagnostic Spelling Test was also administered in late September.(Appendix N) This test generated a great deal of frustration. Many children spent a great deal of time trying to figure out where they should be on the paper, consequently, they missed spelling words. Since so much frustration was apparent, the teacher abandoned this project and tried again in October. In October, the class could concentrate on the words and not the paper as many paper/pencil activities had been completed by then. Since they were much more comfortable with both the teacher and with the school environment, the results were much more reliable.

The teacher began working on the reading/writing continuum at home in the evenings using notes taken on the children each week

in a journal. The journal related incidents occurring during the week in reading, writing, spelling, math, and general conduct. The reading/writing continuum was chosen instead of the Zaner/Bloser because concentration for this project was on reading and writing. (Appendix M) Since the classroom had twenty-eight children with which to work and no one to help administer the oral and speaking continuums they were not seen as helpful for this research.

Each day after writing workshop, any completed writing was put into a three ring binder. Other work in progress was to remain in a folder in the child's desk. Late in September each child chose what he considered to be his best writing for the month from his writing folder. In early October the first "We Noticed" was sent for the parents to review, comment upon, and return to class. (Appendix K) Eight were never returned and of those returned few had any comments.

Beginning in late September and continuing throughout this project, each child was taped reading a self-selected book. (Appendix T) Taping was initially done while the rest of the class was working independently. The teacher soon remembered there is no such thing as "independently" in September of first grade, so again the help of the teacher on special assignment was enlisted to take the class one by one and listen to them read their book. Also, twice a

week, children selected a book to take home in their book bags to read with their parents.

"We Noticed", Reading/Writing Continuum, Diagnostic Spelling Test, reading sample taping, and writing samples were repeated monthly. Student self-reflections tags were not done at this time because the children were not mature enough to understand what was expected of them.

In early November conferences were held and report cards were issued. Teacher observations, anecdotal notes, taped readings, reading workshop, and writing workshop, along with results of the spelling test, provide the information necessary to complete the continuums. As a result of using authentic assessment methods, narratives were given to the parent. The conferences lasted twenty minutes and no children were present.

In March, the students used the "Fix-it" strategy with a previous writing sample. They chose a September story. The child was given a blank sheet of paper and asked to fix the story the best way he/she could. The teacher and child then discussed why the changes were made.

In February right before Portfolio Night the class spent nearly two hours pondering, pouring over, and deliberating over which tag to put on which work. It was marvelous to see the class so intent and thoughtful about what they were doing. This was true reflection!

In March, the class had Portfolio Night. Only two parents could not make the event. Five families were scheduled into a thirty minute time period. The children were instructed beforehand on how best to show off their work. Most parents read the entire contents of the writing portfolio. Each group was meant to stay 30 minutes and so the groups were scheduled at 30 minute intervals. No one was ready to leave after 30 minutes and during the middle of the evening, the room was very crowded with the first group that was still looking over their child's work and the second group who was listening to the tapes or beginning to inspect their child's work. The next Portfolio Night more time needs to be given to each group.

School A's class began the year with the majority of the class in the preconventional group. As shown in the comparison graph below, this group has been significantly reduced while the emergent, developing, and beginning groups have significantly grown.

In February most of the students see themselves as readers and are able to read either pattern or early reader books. They rely more on print than pictures for meaning, and are able to use phonetic clues to decode words. They can recall the beginning, middle, and end of stories and have developed a sight vocabulary.

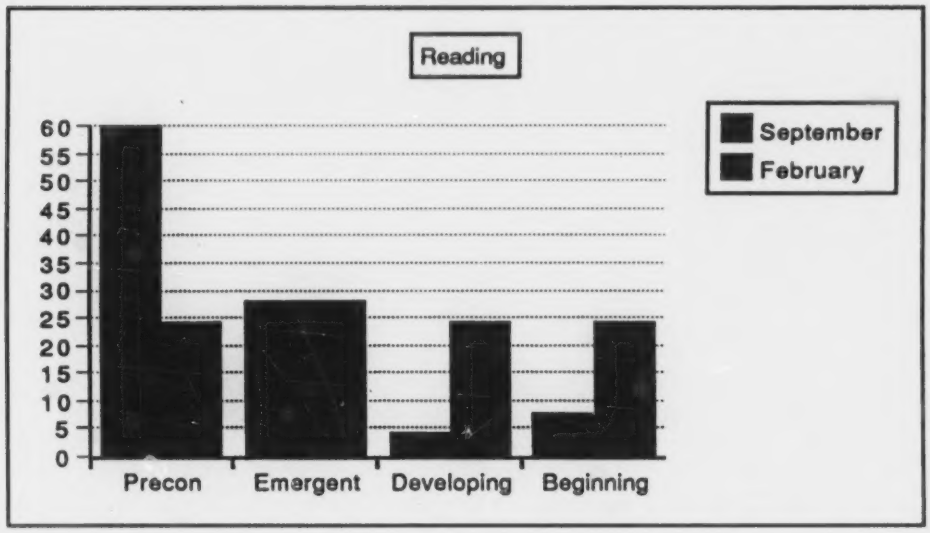

Figure 10

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Reading Continuum for Students at School A (Appendix L)

The September graph below shows a predominance of preconventional writers in School A. As the year progressed this predominance shifted to the emergent level with significant growth shown in the developing and beginning levels. In February, most of the class progressed to the emergent level of writing or above. They saw themselves as writers and used print to convey meaning rather than relying mainly on drawings. Many use proper spacing, beginning, middle, and ending sounds, and proper noun-verb phrases.

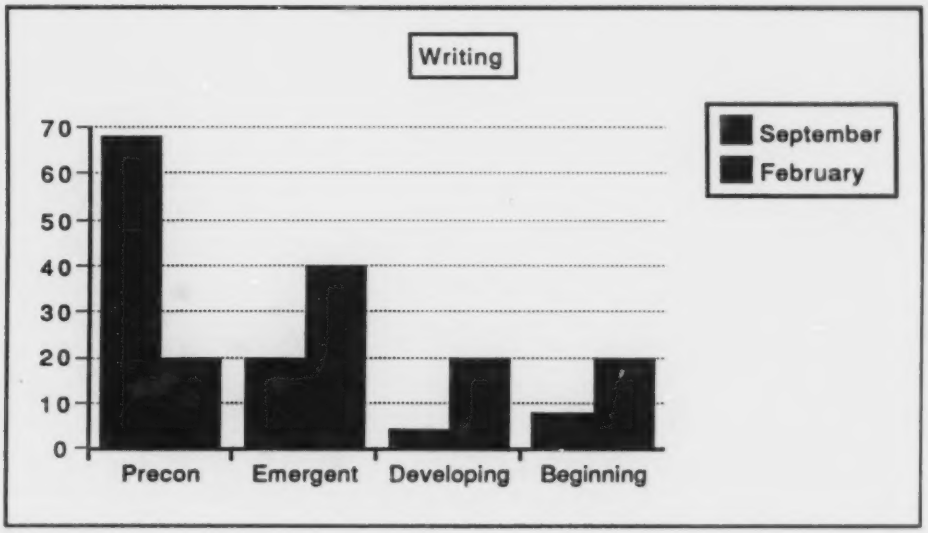

Figure 11

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Writing Continuum for Students at School A (Appendix L)

An even greater contrast in development is shown by the Diagnostic Spelling Test as shown in the graph below. In October, the majority of the class was in the PrePhonetic stage of development. They were using initial or final consonants only. By contrast, in February, the majority of the class was in the phonetic or transitional stage. They were using beginning and ending consonants plus an appropriate or approximate vowel. Some were using the correct short vowel and attempting to use the correct long vowel and blends. Some members of the class were actually using correct spelling.

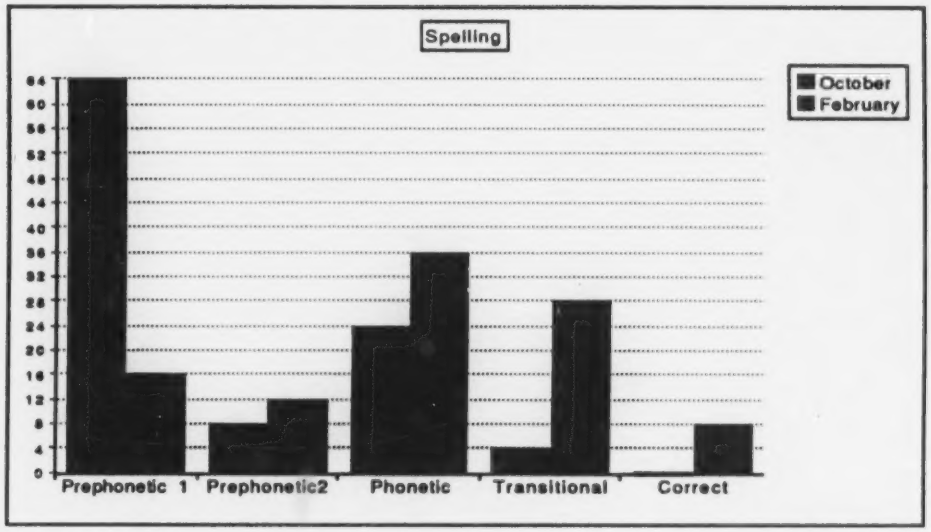

Figure 12

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Diagnostic Spelling Test for Students at School A (Appendix BB)

School B

In order for parents to understand the philosophy and methods used in the reading and writing classroom, parents must be informed. (Appendix D,E,G) A September parents' night provides the opportunity to show samples of work from past first graders. It allows the teacher researcher to present sample portfolios with attached explanations. It allows parents to look at work of former students completed over the course of a school year. These portfolios give parents their own baseline. They are able to see other children's progress over time. However, parents of first

graders, as well as their children, appear to need time to adjust. Concern on parents' night was on the mechanics of first grade. Questions such as "When will they learn to read? What if my child is not reading yet, what will you do? Do you have reading groups? What books do you use? Do they get a report card? Why do they need a separate pair of gym shoes? What door should they come in?" Parent visitation that night was 30 minutes. In order to compensate for this shortage of time, weekly updates on class work was relayed through a newsletter. Also articles on reading and writing workshop were sent to the parents throughout the year.

On Parent's Night, the teacher/researcher intended to have parents complete a Primary Reading and Writing survey. The material covered on Parents' Night was plentiful and consequently, parents did not have sufficient time to thoroughly answer the surveys. The surveys were to go out the following week. However, so much information went out to parents for the first month of school, the Primary Reading and Writing Survey was not sent home, another adjustment to the time line.

As the children continued to adjust to first grade during the month of September, it became evident that the time line needed to be adjusted. The children were able to complete the Fall Self-Portrait without any difficulty. (Appendix O) This was a task that they were familiar with since they had done this on a monthly basis

in kindergarten. However, when tasks that were unfamiliar to the children were administered in September, the end result was not so successful for the children nor the teacher/researcher.

The first attempt at giving the Diagnostic Spelling Test was not successful. (Appendix N) In September more than half the children in the class found the test very difficult. Some were unable to put the letters on the paper. Some children did not know how to make the letters. Some children commented "I hope we never have to do that again!" After six weeks into the school year, students are more comfortable with tasks. The Diagnostic Spelling test would be best introduced to students in late October or early November. The results in November were much different. Children were able to follow the directions. They were not as confused as they appeared in September. In February, the children thought the test was very easy. The Diagnostic Spelling Test proved to be an invaluable tool to share with parents as well as for the teacher/researcher. This test would best be administered to first graders no sooner than mid-October to allow for children to adjust to the routines of first grade. By administering again in December, February, April, and June, definite stages of spelling growth can be tracked.

At the end of September, the teacher/researcher had been unable to administer the Student Reading Attitude Survey or Student Writing Attitude Survey. (Appendix H, I) The Language Arts

Curriculum Specialist assigned to School B was able to administer the Student Reading Attitude Survey. Children were interviewed one to one. Without the assistance of the Curriculum Specialist, this particular survey would not have been administered. The survey did not seem to provide any new or useful information. Consequently, the Student Writing Survey was not administered.

As the month of October began, the children were becoming comfortable with reading and writing workshop. Whereas, in September, it was difficult to get a baseline on children who were not 'reading,' in October, the children were eager to 'read' into the tape recorder with adult assistance. This was an important task for the teacher/researcher to complete. Once again, the Curriculum Specialist was able to assist with this task by taking the class while the teacher read with individual children. The children were able to pick the story. They were encouraged to 'read' the story the best that they could. This assessment tool was repeated in December, with the help of a volunteer, and March, without assistance. In December, the children read a story which they selected and practiced throughout daily quiet reading. In March, the children were given a story to read which they had never read before. They were encouraged to use picture clues as well as context clues to read the story. The children are allowed to listen to their taped reading at any time. The taped readings provided the

teacher/researcher to hear each child read. It allowed the teacher to follow individual progress of the children. By having volunteers the teacher/researcher was able to listen to the readings without interruption. All volunteers were trained and retrained so that the teacher could be assured of continuity in the process.

Writing workshop also provided an important tool for charting children's growth. Throughout September and October, the children wrote stories. They were able to relay ideas through pictures or words or a combination of both. Mini-lessons on topics and writing stories were presented. Children were encouraged to give details of a story. Models were presented frequently as well as self-reflections on stories. In October the first "We Noticed" was sent home.(Appendix K) The children reviewed the stories they had written during the month of September. After selecting a story they were the most proud of writing during September, the children met individually with the teacher to reflect on the story. All comments made by the child and teacher were recorded on the form. This type of reflection had been modeled frequently in large group sessions after Writing Workshop. The next step was to send the story, with the reflection sheet, home to the parents.

In order to prepare parents for this reflection a letter of explanation was attached. (Appendix U) Parents were asked to listen to their child read the selected story and comment on the story. They

were encouraged to talk about the story, not merely the mechanics of writing. Responses indicated that further training on this approach needed to be pursued. At conferences in November, "We Noticed" sheets were presented, discussed, and explained. Further "We Noticed" sheets were successful. Throughout the year, these sheets continued to be sent home on a monthly basis. They enabled parents to see the growth in their child's writing. In March, a special writing sample was sent home with the "We Noticed" reflections paper. The children took a story from the first day of school and in February they rewrote the story as they would tell it at that time. The content of the story, along with the mechanics, showed a noticeable improvement. This "Fix-It" strategy clearly showed the differences in the child of September and the child of February. This was a very exciting strategy for the teacher/researcher. Time and time again, "We Noticed" sheets encouraged the child to set a goal to work on in writing workshop. Parents, teacher, and child become partners in this learning process.

Throughout the year, letters of explanation of procedures, as well as class visitations, allowed parents to see reading and writing workshops in progress. A weekly newsletter kept parents informed of the daily themes and topics that were being studied. Teacher observations, anecdotal notes, reading workshop, taped readings, and writing workshop supplied a wealth of information about each child.

By using the reading and writing continuum along with the Literacy Framework, the teacher/researcher was able to chart the stages of growth in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and vocabulary. (Appendix M) These proved to be invaluable tools for setting individual goals. These continuums were concrete benchmarks for parents. The letters, visitations, and continuums provided parents with a framework for their child's learning.

Before conferences, the teacher/researcher needed to complete three important tasks: update continuums,survey parents, and fill out a conference summary for each child. The teacher/researcher needed to be prepared by using all collected data to update the continuums. Parent questionnaires were sent before conferences so that any questions or concerns could be addressed. (Appendix V) These questionnaires also presented the teacher/researcher with insight into the child. Prior to the conferences parents were encouraged to visit the class for reading or writing workshop. This procedure was followed in both the fall and spring.

In the fall, most parents were concerned with the adjustment of first grade. Concerns and questions from surveys were answered at conferences. Writing samples and continuums were shown and explained. Parents questioned when first graders begin to read. The teacher/researcher used a portfolio from previous students to

illustrated the growth of first graders in reading and writing. Fall conferences were focused more on education of the parent and teacher.

Spring conferences allowed students to become active participants. Training needed to be provided for the students.The procedure was explained to the children. They were told they would be in charge of the meeting. They would need to show their parents the pieces that they thought were important in the portfolios. They studied them beforehand and noted items that were significant to them. They would need to tell us why they were important.

The "Tag It" method is a means of self-reflection for the child. Tags, such as 'This was hard for me...' 'My favorite...' 'I would do this over....', were provided for the children. (Appendix Q) They individually went through their portfolios and attached a tag to a certain piece. On the back of the tag, students were required to write the reason that they selected a certain tag. The students could use the preprinted tags or make up ones of their own choosing.

After completing their tags, the children met in small groups to share their reflections. Then each child practiced sharing their portfolio with another child. Finally, they practiced sharing their portfolio with the teacher/researcher. This procedure took several hours on two separate days.

In November, January, and late February, the teacher/researcher taped students reading three times. Two of the readings were the student's choice and the last reading was the teacher's choice. The taped readings demonstrated growth in reading orally. The taped readings allowed parents to hear the growth their child made in reading. Due to time constraints with Spring Conferences, tapes were sent home beforehand to be shared by parents and child. Along with the tape, letters were sent to parents explaining the procedure for conferences.

At the conference, the child and parent sat together. They studied and explored the portfolio. The children exhibited confidence when explaining and reading their pieces. Parents asked questions and commented on the content of the stories. They shared in their child's learning experience. This was truly a celebration of growth.

The Diagnostic Speliing Test is a tool that is understandable for most parents. They can easily see their child's growth. As the students become comfortable with the stages of spelling, they also progress on the reading continuum. The Diagnostic Spelling Test coincides with student's reading ability. As most of the children begin the school year they are at a PrePhonetic Stage. They know some beginning sounds but are not consistent with letter-sound relationship. As the year progresses students recognize beginning and ending consonant sounds (PrePhonetic 2). At this stage they also

begin to recognize high frequency words. Then students understand clusters, medial consonant sounds, and vowel placement. They continue to add to their sight vocabulary list. By February most students are at a Transitional Stage of Spelling and working very diligently toward the Correct Stage of Spelling.

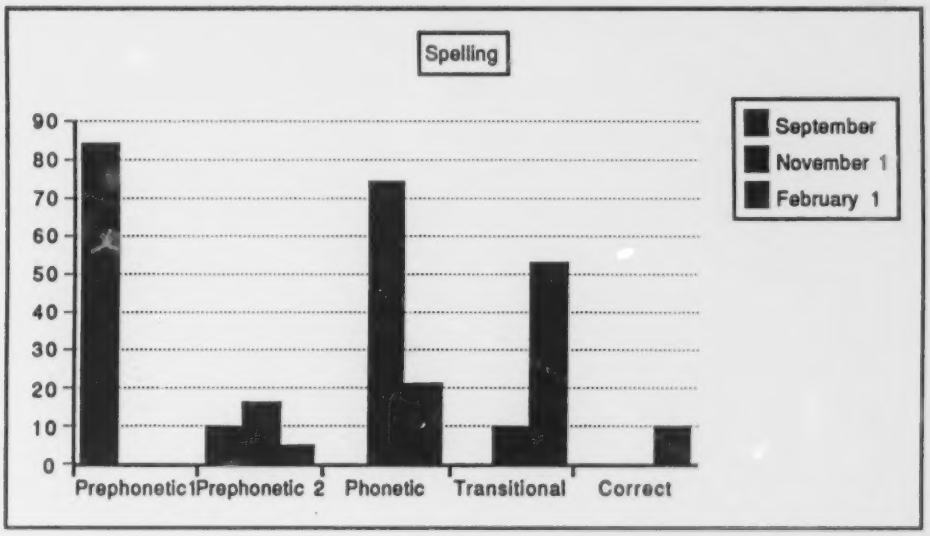

Figure 13

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Diagnostic Spelling Test for Students at School B (Appendix BB)

Children go through many stages while learning to read and write. A Reading and Writing Continuum make it possible for the teacher/researcher to plot a child's growth. A Reading and Writing Continuum enables parents to look at the stages of growth. It allows parents to be able to see where the child has been and where he/she

will be going. Concrete benchmarks are listed under each stage. Growth in a child-centered classroom allows the child to reach many peaks and valleys.

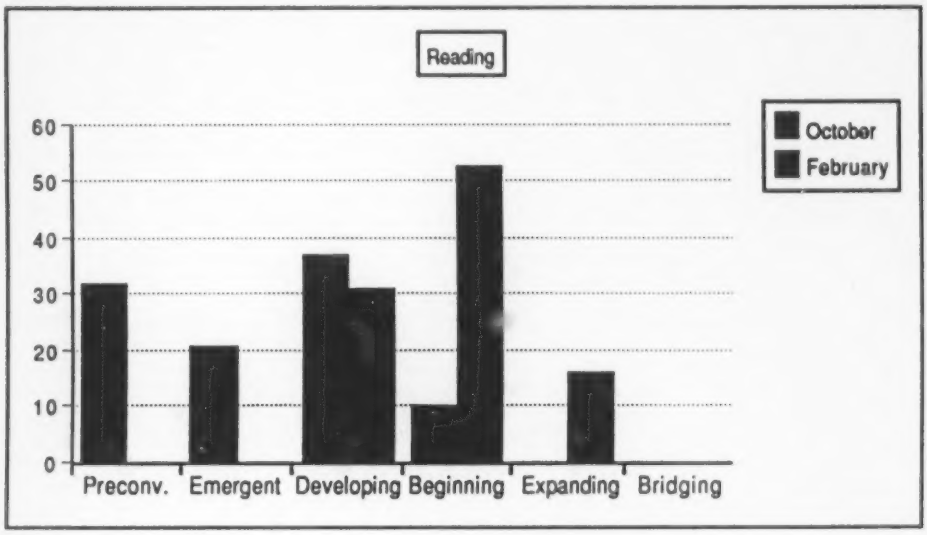

Figure 14

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Reading Continuum for Students at School B (Appendix L)

Trust is a necessary ingredient for Writing Workshop. The student must feel that they can write freely about any topic. At a primary level it is important to model writing for students. It allows them to see the process for writing. Writing Workshop during the first few weeks of school focuses on selecting a topic. During Writing Workshop in September some topics are suggested but as time goes on the students select their own topic. The students

become responsible for their own learning. A variety of literature, along with modeling writing, provides an environment that encourages completion of a story acknowledging the process of writing. The student concentrates on the content of the story. As the year continues the skills and mechanics of writing are introduced when appropriate. All of these stages can be plotted on the Writing Continuum.

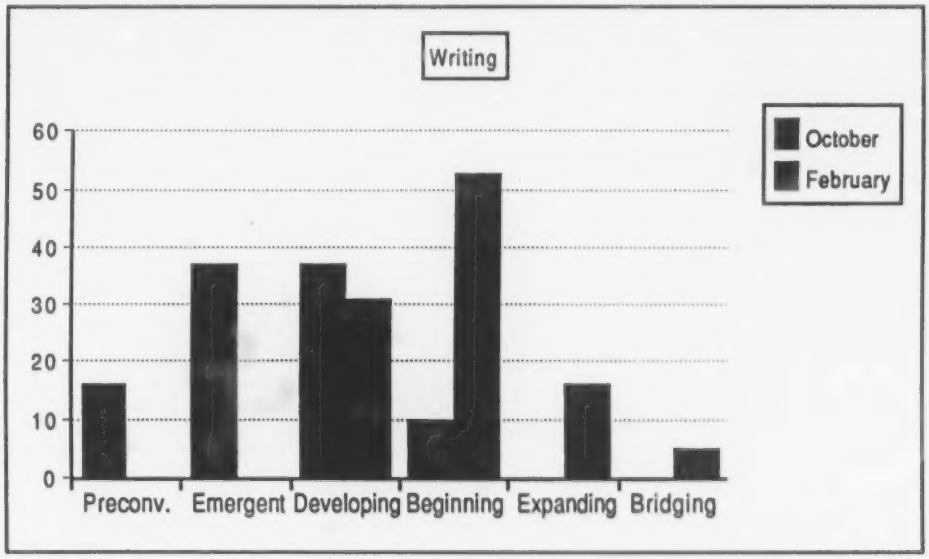

Figure 15

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Writing Continuum for Students at School B (Appendix L)

School C

The teacher/researcher began the intervention by conceptualizing the process of reading and writing. Children coming

into second grade have been introduced to the process of decoding text, and most children are able to use these skills but at different rates and abilities. Breaking the code of the written text is partly dependent on the component of the word, but more importantly it is the integration of these words to develop meaning. The writing process is the composition of the spelling of the word, and the ideation of thought to generate and organize ideas. Children at this age can and do communicate with the written text, but again, as in reading, at a different rate and pace.

In June of the 1994-95 school year the researcher sent out surveys to the parents of that former year to determine their understanding and reaction to the methods used to explain the growth of their child in the reading and writing process. This baseline information was then collected and analyzed to determine the need for the present study. A survey of teachers was also conducted to determine the need for the proposed intervention. The conceptualized proposed problem based intervention seemed appropriate for the professional arena as well as in the parental community after analyzing the surveys. (Appendix A)

To begin the intervention a Parent Letter was sent home introducing the teacher/researcher and the proposed study. (Appendix B) The letter explained that a new tool for assessing growth in the reading and writing process would be implemented in

their child's classroom. At the suggestion of the principal of School C, a letter was sent by the teacher/researcher to the district superintendent assuring him that all present methods of reporting progress to parents adopted by the district would be in place and that nothing would be altered. The proposed study would be in addition to the present system.

During Parent Night in September, parents were informed of the proposed intervention. An informational packet was distributed to parents to help them with home/school strategies on how to help a child learn to read. (Appendix D, E, G) The parents were also introduced to the concept of a portfolio. At that time the teacher/researcher explained and presented an example of a portfolio that contained samples of a child's work, a child's selected readings, and the reading and writing continuums.(Appendix L) Collectively these would be used to assess individual performance in these two academic areas. The parents were very interested in the portfolio concept. Questions were centered around the way it would impact their child as compared to other children at their grade level. "Would they learn the same things as the other second graders in the school? " Parents were assured that all material would be in addition to the present evaluation systems in place in the district. Parents were receptive to the proposed idea.

To determine the interest of the student in the proposed academic studies, a Reading and Writing Attitude Survey was administered.(Appendix H, I) This survey and a self portrait were placed in their portfolio for further comparisons when the year ended. (Appendix O)

To determine a baseline in reading and writing the teacher/researcher completed the Reading and Writing Continuums in place of the Reading/Writing Continuum Checklist. The researcher felt that the designs duplicated the information and the one continuum was sufficient. The researcher also completed the Zaner/Bloser literacy framework for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. (Appendix M) These two tools were informative to the teacher as to the functioning ability of the student entering second grade. They were easy enough but time consuming to complete, but provided a wealth of information to the parent, student, and to the teacher. Because of the information received from the two previous evaluative tools, the teacher/researcher did not administer the Familiarity with Reading and Writing Screening to second graders. (Appendix J)

Taped readings of the student's favorite book or story were added to the portfolio. (Appendix T) This task proved to be time consuming in the beginning month of the school year. Alteration of the time line was necessary for its completion. As the intervention

progressed the students were able to complete this task with relative ease.

Attempting to complete the given tasks at the beginning of a school year proved to be very difficult. Developing the managerial skill to operate a classroom needs to be in place before the student can and should accomplish this task on their own.

At the end of the first month of school the students were asked to review their writings from their writer workshop collection. They were asked to review and select their piece of writing that held the most significance to them. They were asked to tag their writing piece (Appendix Q). This piece or pieces of writings were placed into their portfolio as a sample of their performance.

The "We Noticed" reflection sheet was also completed by the student, parent, and teacher on the selected piece of writing. (Appendix K) Strengths and needs of the child's writing performance were noted at that time. This task of self-reflection was uncomfortable for the student at first. Their initial written responses were, "I liked the story because it's nice", or "I liked my story because it's good". Self-reflection techniques needed to be modeled by the teacher/researcher and practiced by the student. Continuous positive comments stress the qualities of 'a good writer'. This allowed the student to develop the skills necessary for

self-reflection. This self-reflection strategy allows student's to take responsibility for their own growth and learning.

The Diagnostic Spelling Test was administered in the month of October. (Appendix N) This test was used to develop a baseline for the student's spelling ability. This was non-threatening to the student. The results were documented in the portfolio. This same test was again given in February with results recorded in their portfolio.

To record the growth in the reading process lists of the students readings were logged in their portfolio. The student kept track of what they had read and entered their log into the portfolio. This task at first seemed laborious to the student, and took a great deal of class time. As the months progressed this task was completed with ease. When analyzing the list the researcher looked for pattern in reading choices. This helped to determine a more realistic leisure reading level for the student.

Throughout the intervention, the same procedures were followed monthly. The children would collect and select their best pieces of writing, tag and complete a "We Noticed" reflection sheet, and log the books read in that month. The teacher/researcher would conference with the student expressing positive feedback. Suggestions were given to help improve the quality of the written work. For example, " I liked the way you used commas." " Remember

to read your writings to a friend, and then read it again to yourself." These comments were never written on the students piece of writing. Post It notes were used to tag each student's work. The students looked forward to the comments. This was a non-threatening device to encourage growth.

In January and February the "Fix-It" strategy was introduced. Most of the students were able to self-correct a writing piece with ease. This strategy proved to be rewarding to the student. The student at this time began to see how they had grown as a writer. The Reading and the Writing continuum was also completed in the month of February. At this time the student's growth could be seen by the teacher, student, and parent.

In mid-February at Open House/Portfolio Night the parents were asked to review their child's portfolio and to complete a Portfolio Survey. (Appendix W) The responses were very encouraging. "The value is to the child. It allows him to see how much he has learned over several months. When the parents review the portfolio with the child, it further reinforces this growth. I like it." (M. Baljevich, personal communication, Feb. 22, 1996). Parents, students, and the teacher came together to celebrate the growth in the reading and writing process.

If we look at the data collected from the writing continuum in October, we would find that fifty percent of the students entering

second grade were either in the developing or beginning stages of writing while the remaining fifty percent were in the expanding and bridging stages of a writer.

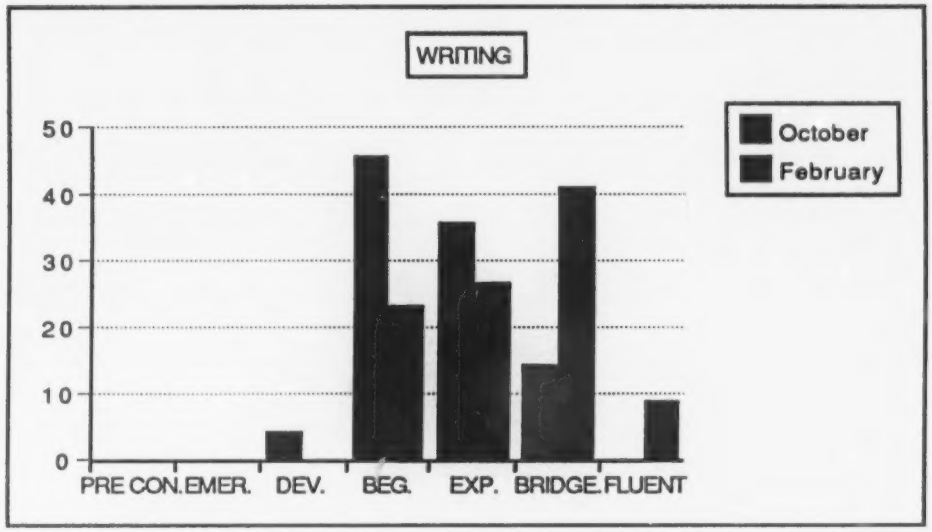

Figure 16

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Writing Continuum for Students at School C (Appendix L)

In the developing stage the students can clearly write with some recognizable letters and with a few familiar words. They could use beginning, middle, and ending sounds, to make these words. They are able to read their own writing aloud, but later may not remember what they had intended.

In the beginning stage of writing the student writes about immediate experiences that they and others can read. They begin to recognize shcrt sentences with some descriptive words. They use some capital and periods, but not always in the right places. Many letters are formed legibly. Some worlds are spelled phonetically, and some are correct. They often start a story with "Once upon a time" or finish with "The end." Some children revise by adding on.

If the child was in the expanding stage of a writer you would find the student writing about their experiences and interest. Pieces would containing a beginning, middle and an end with some modest degree of details. They enjoy reading their stories and are able to offer feedback to peers. Though they are still very inconsistent in their editing skills they are beginning to grow. Many common words are spelled correctly. They do not labor over the act of writing.

The expanding stage of a writer the student begins to develop and organize their ideas into paragraphs. They can write for different purposes. Their editing skill are more precise. Literacy devices such as dialogue, are added during the revision process.

When we look at the data collected from the reading continuum also in the month of October we find that sixty-four percent of the children were in the beginning and developing stages of reading while thirty-six percent were in the expanding or bridging stages of reading.

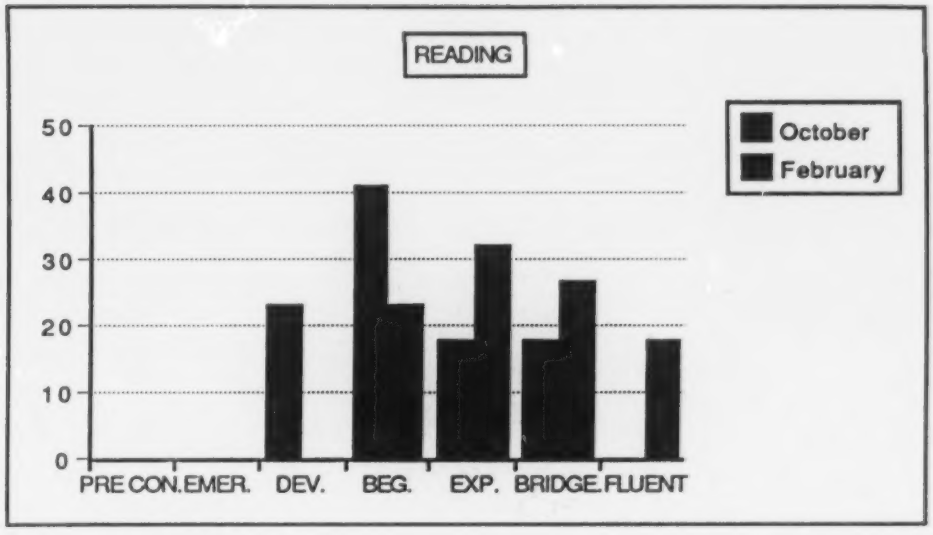

Figure 17

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Reading Continuum for Students at School C (Appendix L)

During the developing stages of a reader the students sees themselves as a reader, reading simple books such as pattern books, or rhyming books. They know most letters and sounds, and recognize simple words. They can blend print and illustrations to develop meaning. They are able to retell the main idea of a story.

In the beginning stages of a reader you would find the student being able to read early-reader. During silent reading the student may initially browse but gradually are able to silent read for short periods of time. They know many words by sight. They can tell the

beginning, middle and end of a story. This is an exciting time for a reader.

The expanding stage of a reader would more likely be referred to as the practicing and stretching stage. These students can predict favorite books, but are willing to stretch into new variety of material such as chapter books, non-fiction, comics, and children's magazines. They have been introduced to a number of different strategies and can apply them independently. They are more likely to make the connection between the reading and the writing process.

This bridging stage for the reader is the connecting stage. The student reads books that no longer are vocabulary controlled. They read for longer periods of time with a variety of material such as medium chapter books, magazines, explorer science books. They can do simple reports by using reference material. They are beginning to understand the importance of a setting to a story. They can also compare and contrast books.

In February of that same year data was again collected from the reading and the writing continuum. It was interesting to note that twenty-three percent of the student were still in the beginning stages on the reading and writing continuum while seventy-seven percent of the students were in the expanding, the bridging, and the fluent stage in the two academic areas. This would indicate

that most of the children had made the connection between the reading and the writing process.

Of that seventy-seven percent in reading, eighteen percent were fluent, meaning that they showed increased sophistication with reading. As a result, they were able to deal with subject matters that were more complex. They participate in teacher-guided literacy discussions such as Great Book Discussion Groups.

In writing, only nine percent of the class were in the fluent stage. This stage is more complex with the students using transitions such as, however, and, but, and or effectively. During editing they find most of their spelling errors, punctuation, and capitalization errors. They are organized and able to write a multi-paragraph paper. Students in the fluent stage are at ease with writing.

Examining the data will demonstrate that the targeted second graders growth in reading exceeds their growth in writing by about nine percent. Children who are growing in reading develop better vocabularies, they will read even more, learn more words meanings, and hence read even better. Children who read more and experience more ideas transfer this knowledge to the written text by incorporated these ideas and styles into their writing. A greater variety of reading experiences lead the reader, as shown through research, to become a better writer. One can project that the

children will continue to grow in the writing as they increase in their reading.

Looking at the student as a writer a Spelling Diagnostic Test was given in October and in February. The data indicates that most of the children at the beginning of the year were in the Transitional stages of of a speller. Children at the transitional stage use vowels and letter patterns to convey the word. As the year progressed data indicated that the majority of the students were able to spell more conventionally. Student's perception of themselves changed. They thought of themselves as spellers with the skill and ability to form the connection with the writing and reading process.

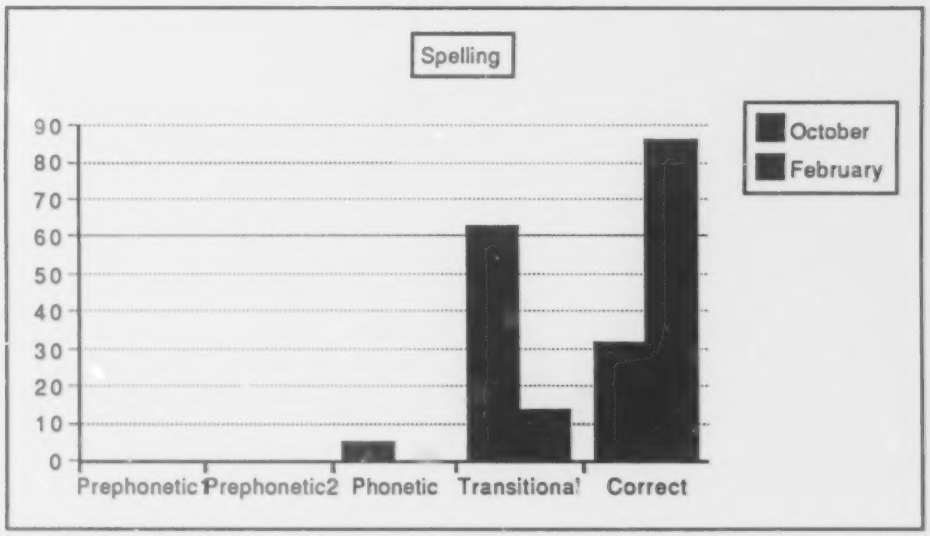

Figure 18

September/February Comparison of Placement on the Diagnostic Spelling Test for Students at School C (Appendix BB)

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The researcher discovered that conventional spelling develops when children write every day in a classroom filled with language. The cited data supports these findings.

Every child learns to read differently. Therefore, students need to be taught reading strategies, knowledge of reading material available to accommodate individual interests, and an awareness of the purpose for reading. In a child-centered classroom these elements seem to be addressed.

Children also learn to write differently. The environment to facilitate learning free of failure woven with success needs to be in place, but this alone was not enough. Strategies needed to be learned, and an awareness of the qualities of a good writer needed to be incorporated into the structure of the teaching.

The fundamental purposes of gathering and sharing any wisdom about children's growth in the classroom is to understand each child's process as a learner and to communicate this information primarily to the student and then to the parents.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Students demand a great deal of attention during the first few weeks of school. The range of development, academically, emotionally, and socially, are very extensive. While a few students are able to work independently for a short time span, others are

unable to complete any task. This wide range of development presents some logistic problems for the teacher/researcher. During the early weeks of school, it is advantageous to the primary teacher to have assistants and support whenever possible. Late September/early October proved to be a smoother time to initiate baseline measurement tests for both first and second graders.

The teacher/researchers believe that a child-centered classroom and performance-based assessments are truly worthwhile. Bookkeeping and time management became issues of concern throughout the intervention. The teacher/researchers continuously adapted and reviewed time lines and materials being used. Some assessment tools, such as Emergent Writing and Familiarity with Reading and Writing, were very similar to the criterion on the Writing Continuum. Since the continuum for both Reading and Writing met the needs of the teacher/researchers, this assessment tool became the focus for showing growth. The Diagnostic Spelling Test proved to be a useful tool for demonstrating the stages of spelling. However, this test was difficult to administer the first month of school for first graders. It proved to be easier to administer in late October or early November for first grade classes.

A child-centered classroom allows students have a voice in their learning. Students become involved in curriculum choices. They

set their own goals and time lines for these goals. Students are motivated to work to achieve individual goals. The focus is on individual growth and individual achievements.

Reading and Writing Workshop empower students to be active participants in their own evaluation and learning. Throughout reading and writing workshop, growth is continuously demonstrated. Students evaluate what they've read or written and make decisions about what is important to them. Work samples kept in a portfolio serve as excellent vehicles for providing examples of students' work at various stages. Portfolios and authentic assessment mirror the actual process in which students are engaged as they develop and grow.

The reading and writing continuum provides the student, teacher, and parents with a time line of a student's learning and knowledge. One reason for using a continuum is to emphasize that learning is a process and that the emphasis should be on progress, rather than on competition. It helps keep track of the students' abilities and encourages self-evaluation. Consequently, continuums empower students to be active participants in their own evaluation and learning. It is an everlasting list of where you are. The parents, student, and teacher can work together to encourage student growth in the learning process.

Parents were given the opportunity to be active participants in their child's learning throughout the year. By informing parents about Reading and Writing Workshop in September the teacher/researchers were establishing a foundation for the year. The "We Noticed" strategy was a monthly tool which kept parents apprised of growth in writing. Portfolio Night was a culmination of this monthly communication. Parents indicated in a survey that Portfolio Night and the "We Noticed" strategy were very helpful in learning about their child. While only 50 percent of the parents surveyed responded to the teacher/researchers, the majority of parents felt that the information relayed on Portfolio Night demonstrated the most growth in their child.

Based on the presentation and analysis of data, the teachers/researchers found that performance assessments do improve the teaching of reading and writing. This intervention encouraged the teachers/researchers to be facilitators of learning. It is an integral part of the teaching and learning process that guides the teacher and student in making decisions about the development and growth of a student. By using a child-centered curriculum, the student is not overlooked as the developing learner. Students are more motivated to learn and are more engaged in project-based tasks as demonstrated through metacognitive strategies throughout this intervention. Through this intervention

parents were provided with pertinent information about their child's growth in reading and writing. Students, parents, and teachers discovered this intervention to be a continuous form of celebrating growth and setting goals for the future.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A
Former Parent Survey

This study is being conducted by Terilyn Turner, Joanne Mulvihill, and Mary Kay Dunne, students in the Field-Based Masters Program at St. Xavier's University. The purpose of the study is to improve reading and writing process in first and second grade. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you decide to participate, the information you provide will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached survey.

Summer 1995

Dear Parents,

We are interested in your ideas and opinions about evaluating your child's progress in reading and writing in second grade. Please take a minute to respond to these questions and return in the enclosed envelope.

1. Do you feel the information about your child's reading progress from the second grade teacher was:

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

2. Do you feel the information about your child's writing progress from the second grade teacher was:

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

3. Did the report card help you see your child's growth in reading last year?

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

4. Did the report card help you see your child's growth in writing last year?

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questionnaire. Your input is greatly appreciated. Please return by August 28th in the enclosed envelope.

Professionally Yours,

Mrs. Joanne Mulvihill

APPENDIX B
Parent Portfolio Letter

Dear Parents:

Improving our schools demands that we examine our traditional methods of instruction and assessing our children's work. Assuring success for all students should be an expected outcome for all students.. To establish this changes in our schools the traditional methods of assessing and evaluating need to be examined. Meaningful changes in teaching our students and assessing their progress need to be made.

Test mostly show what children cannot do. This method of assessing growth is usually the only means that we in the school environment use to report student progres to the student, to the parent, and to the community. Within the classroom, however, there are other ways to measure student learning. Samples of students work, teacher observations, student projects and performances and self reflection are all evaluative mean to assess student success. These "alternative assessments" focus on what a child can do, and are an important part of the learning process.

These alternative assessments documents are a collection of valuable information.They record changes in learning over time. They show the unique needs and strengths of the student. These documents will be kept in what I will call your child's portfolio. These portfolios will be kept for each child and will be an ongoing ever changing tool for effecting change in learning, and for effecting change in the delivery of instruction for each student.

I hope that you will take the time to review these portfolios throughout the year with your child and come to understand the rich learning tool that has been unveiled.

Professional yours,

APPENDIX B

August 31, 1995

Dear Parents,

This year your child will be participating in an exciting new program. We will be putting together a collection of his/her work and keeping it in a portfolio.

The portfolio supplements the report card and is a way for parents, students, teachers, and administrators to more easily see a student's progress throughout the year.

Traditional assessments, such as standardized tests, mostly show what children cannot do. However, with teacher observations, samples of student work, and student projects documented over time, a rich collection of information about learning can be provided. Instructional programs can then be tailored to fit your child's needs.

Just as professional artists show their best work in a portfolio, your child will showcase his/her best or most improved samples or reading and writing in his/her portfolio.

Your child will learn how to evaluate his/her own work and how to set goals for future growth.

In the portfolio, I will also be saving checklists, interviews, and your child's own assessments of reading and writing, as well as notes from you about your child's learning.

Throughout the school year, I will ask you to review the portfolio and share with me your comments and observations about your child's work.

First grade curriculum night is planned for Wednesday, Sept. 6 at 7:00p.m. (No children please)

Please mark that date on your calendar as it is a very important meeting. You will be introduced to the first grade curriculum and given more information about the portfolios your child will be using this year.

Sincerely,
Terilyn Turner

I will be able to make the curriculum night on Wednesday, Sept. 7.

signed_____

APPENDIX B

November 9, 1995

Dear Parents,

As I mentioned earlier in the year, I have gone back to school for my Master's Degree. I am enrolled in a Field-Based program through the Illinois Renewal Institute and St. Xavier's University. I am currently in the final months of the program. As part of this Master's program, an Action Research Project is required. I have chosen to work with Authentic Assessment in the first grade classroom.

I have always believed in good communication between school and home. I have felt that you could see your child's progress best by understanding their work. Throughout the program I have implemented many strategies into my classroom last year as well as this year. Changes in my Reading and Writing Workshops, along with cooperative learning have helped my classroom become more child-centered. The children are becoming more aware of their learning and goals. They are looking at their stories and deciding what changes they need to make. The 'We Noticed.." pages are self-reflections on how to improve. The 'Fix -It Strategy,' which you will see at conference time, is a method which shows where they have made progress. All of these changes in methods have caused me to look at the manner in which schools communicate a child's growth not only to the parent but to the child also.

As part of the Action Research Project, I will need to use the children's work in their portfolios. Of course, the children's names will not be used. I would also like to use their audio tapes from Reading Workshop. Later in the year, I would like to videotape them during Writing Workshop and Author's Chair. I will also need to use surveys and comments from you about conferences, portfolios, and your child's work.

APPENDIX B

My ultimate goal with this project is to have better communication between you, your child, and me.

Attached to this letter is a permission sheet for you to read and return. If you do not wish to have your child's work used please do not hesitate to note that on the permission slip. I will not be using every child's audio tape or video tape. I will not be using every child's portfolio. I will be taking a sampling of these materials. I will need to use some of the materials for an exhibition for other teachers. Please think about this project and look at the permission slip. Thank you for your help with this project.

Kindly,

Mrs. Mary K. Dunne

APPENDIX B

- I give permission to use _____ (child's name) portfolio for Mrs. Mary K. Dunne's Action Research Project for Illinois Renewal Institute and St. Xavier's University.

- I do not give permission to use _____ (child's name) portfolio for Mrs. Mary K. Dunne's Action Research Project for Illinois Renewal Institute and St. Xavier's University.

_____(Parent Signature)

- I give permission to use _____ (child's name) audio tapes for Mrs. Mary K. Dunne's Action Research Project for Illinois Renewal Institute and St. Xavier's University.

- I do not give permission to use _____ (child's name) audio tapes for Mrs. Mary K. Dunne's Action Research Project for Illinois Renewal Institute and St. Xavier's University.

_____(Parent Signature)

- I give permission to use _____ (child's name)video tape for Mrs. Mary K. Dunne's Action Research Project for Illinois Renewal Institute and St. Xavier's University.

- I do not give permission to use _____ (child's name) video tape for Mrs. Mary K. Dunne's Action Research Project for Illinois Renewal Institute and St. Xavier's University

_____(Parent Signature)

APPENDIX C
Teacher Survey

This study is being conducted by Terilyn Turner, Joanne Mulvihill, and Mary Kay Dunne, students in the Field-Based Masters Program at St. Xavier's University. The purpose of the study is to improve reading and writing process in first and second grade. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you decide to participate, the information you provide will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached survey.

Teacher Survey

1. Have your methods of instruction changed over the last five years? _____
If so, how? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Have your methods of assessment changed over the last five years? _____
If so, how? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Have you ever taken a course on assessment? ___
If so, what? _____
_____

4. Do you feel the present evaluation system is in conflict with your teaching methods? _____
Why? _____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX D
Home School Strategies

HOME SCHOOL STRATEGIES

One way to close any written narrative is to write an appropriate suggestion for the parents that might increase the child's literacy growth over the next quarter. The following list may start you thinking about comments that can become part of your narratives. If a suggestion applies to many children, put it in your newsletter to parents.

- Make regular visits to the public library with your child. Stay and read a book together. Help your child learn to locate information and books at the library.
- Most children like to read in a quiet place. Turn the TV off to cut down distractions. Find a comfortable reading spot.
- Make letters or words from play dough. Even more fun, make them from bread dough. Bake and eat!
- Talk to your child about what you will read before you begin. Help him/her make predictions about the characters and story by looking at the title and pictures. After reading see if the child can retell the story or tell how the story relates to his/her experience.
- Select books that are interesting to you. If the book is poorly written or puts you to sleep, you can probably make a better choice. Find books that you enjoyed as a child to share with your children.
- If your child rides in the car a lot, keep a bag of books in the car or your purse.
- Play board games and word games with your child.
- Reuse old magazines and newspapers. Cut out letters to make a name. Cut out comic strip titles and alphabetize. Use a marker to circle headline words that he/she can read. Use grocery ads to cut out names of favorite foods or sample meals.
- Show your child the importance of reading and writing by modeling it and showing your enthusiasm for a good article or funny cartoon.
- Read together 15 minutes every day.

APPENDIX D

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE FOR THE EMERGENT READER

One way parents can help an *emergent reader is to use the Language Experience Approach. Through this approach students learn that:

"What they say can be written down.
What is written down, can be read.
What others say can be written down.
They can read what others write down."

The following are some suggested steps to use with the Language Experience Approach:

1. Read a story to your child.
2. Ask your child to draw a picture of a favorite part of the story.
3. Ask your child to tell you about the picture while you write down what was said.
4. Ask your child to read what was written down while you point to the words.
5. Consider saving the Language Experience stories in a folder re-reading them with your child on a regular basis.

* An emergent reader is a child who shows an interest in books but is not reading yet.

APPENDIX D

"PAIRED READING" PROGRAM

1. The child or parent **selects** the reading material.

2. **Look** through the book or story/article with the child discussing the pictures and vocabulary unique to this selection. This will give the child a general feeling for the language structure of the book and will help him/her read with more ease.

3. Start reading in **unison** with the child. **Phase** your voice out when you think he child can read independently or when he/she gives the signal to read alone. (When there's text the child feels comfortable with, he/she makes a prearrange nonverbal signal such as a knock, nudge, squeeze, or tap.)

4. The child continues reading alone until an error is made. **Wait** to correct the error until the child completes the sentence because he/she may self correct when it becomes obvious that the sentence doesn't make sense.

5. When he/she stops on a word, **wait** for approximately ten seconds so that the child can try his/her reading strategies such as:
   - Saying the beginning sound of the word.
   - Thinking about what would make sense.
   - Rereading the sentence.
   - "Crashing" into the word saying the word that would make sense.
   - Cross checking with the letters provided to see if there's a match.
   - Reading on to see if it sounds right and makes sense.
   - Rereading if necessary and trying again.

6. Then, if the word is not known, tell him/her the word and begin reading in **unison** with the child again until the child gives the signal to read alone or you think he/she can read independently.

7. There is much **praise** throughout the reading for such things as correct reading, self corrections, and signaling to read alone.

8. The amount of time recommended is five sessions per week of about 10-15 minutes.

(Adapted from Keith Topping's article, *"Paired Reading: A Powerful Technique for Parent Use,"* The Reading Teacher, March, 1987.)

7/92

READING ALOUD

According to the Report of the Commission on Reading, ". . . the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children." (Becoming a Nation of Readers, p. 23)

Here are some ideas about what makes a good read aloud and some do's and don'ts for reading aloud.

What Makes a Good Read Aloud?
(Adapted from Jim Trealease's book)

1. Will it bring out a child's imagination and curiosity?
2. Will it cause the child to feel compassion or humor?
3. Does the language have a rhythm and a flow?
4. Do the characters help the child to understand more about themselves and others?
5. Is the plot exciting and fast moving?
6. Is there easy to read, short dialogue?
7. Are long descriptive passages kept to a minimum?

Some Do's and Don'ts of Read Aloud
(Adapted from Jim Trealease's book)

Do's
1. Do try to set a regular time.
2. Let your child talk about the book.
3. Encourage child to make predictions.
4. Take time to answer questions.
5. Use expression when reading. Try to change the tone of voice to fit the dialogue.
6. Read slow enough to allow the listener to make a visual picture of what is being read.
7. Try to read the book to yourself ahead of time to see if there are any parts you might want to shorten, leave out, or paraphrase.

Don'ts
1. Don't read stories you don't enjoy.
2. Don't keep reading a story if it's obvious your child doesn't like it.

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APPENDIX D

READING WITH YOUR CHILD

Select a book your child can read with approximately 90% or better accuracy (missing approximately one in ten words). (If you need help finding books at your child's level, the classroom teacher, reading teacher, or the librarian can assist.)

Three or four times a week, sit with your child and listen to him/her read. ("To learn to read a child must read. The answer is as simple and as difficult as that." Frank Smith).

The following steps are suggested:

1. Read the title of the book to your child.

2. Look through the book or selected story with your child, discussing the different pictures and the words/phrases that might be difficult. This will give an overview of the book and the language structure and will help your child read with more ease.

3. Ask your child to begin reading.

4. If a word is misread, consider allowing your child to continue reading to see if s/he notices the mistake and self corrects.

5. If s/he stops on a word, wait about ten seconds to allow the child enough time to try different reading strategies. If s/he needs help, prompt with the following steps:
   - Say the beginning sound of the word.
   - Think about what would make sense and starts with the letter(s) given.
   - Reread the sentence.
   - Crash into the word saying the word that would make sense.
   - Cross check with the letters provided.
   - Read on to see if it sounds right.
   - Reread if necessary and try again.

6. Then, if the word is not known, tell him/her the word. (It is important to keep the flow of reading going so that your child will understand what is read and enjoy reading.)

7. At the end of the selection or after about 15 minutes, stop and talk about a favorite part.

8. Conclude with praising your child for how well s/he read.

APPENDIX E
Learning to Read at Home

Learning to Read at Home

Five suggestions for parents who want to help their children become successful readers

BY BOBBI FISHER

"As a parent, it's important to appreciate the reading stage of your child and not try to push him or her ahead."

Dear Parents:
Each year parents ask me what they can do at home to help their children read, and I always suggest that they read to their children every day. However, this obvious response doesn't seem to satisfy anymore. I find that although parents are reading to their children more and more, they want more specific information about the reading process.

Children come to school at different stages in their reading development. Some are "emergent readers": They are learning about books and story, and are beginning to focus on various concepts about print, such as knowing where to start in the book and on the page, and recognizing letters and marks of punctuation. Others are "initial readers": They are beginning to identify particular words in context, correct their errors and, with a high degree of accuracy, can slowly read a familiar book. Some children, of course, are already "independent readers."

As a parent, it's important to *appreciate* the reading stage of your child and not try to push him or her ahead. Reading is a process and children need to follow the process in their own unique way. If you keep in mind that the process of reading is for meaning, and that reading should always be joyous and rewarding, you'll be able to help your child.

Specifically, what are some of the things you can do at home to help your child be a successful reader? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Read to your child. I suggest at least five books a day, which would result in at least 1,875 books a year. That's a sizeable number of books by anyone's count, but bear in mind that beginning books are rarely very long. Many picture books, in fact, have only a sentence or two on each page. Also, the five books don't have to be read all at once; rather they can be enjoyed at various times during the day—one book after breakfast, for example, another before dinner and so on. Such a rich experience gives children a sense of story and a wealth of language patterns.

2. Talk with your child about the stories you read together. Before reading, talk about what the child knows about the story topic and predict what the story might be about. After reading, confirm or disconfirm the predictions. Do this together, not as a question-and-answer activity.

3. Listen to your child. Take your cue from what your child is interested in. One successful way to do this is to keep your comments related to the topics and ideas that your child brings up as you share a story. This technique will enable you to keep focused on the child's interest.

4. Listen to your child read to you *only* if he or she wants to. Reading to a parent involves a lot of trust which will only come if your child feels that story time is a time of love and total acceptance. Therefore, don't correct your child's errors, but learn to quietly appreciate all that is learned when mistakes are made and self-corrections by the child follow. When children self-correct, we know they are progressing in reading. Self-correction only occurs when the reader pays attention to meaning.

5. Read your child's favorite stories over and over again. As adults, we often tire of the same story, but for a child, having a favorite story—with its high emotional identification—is probably a benchmark for his or her emergence as a reader. From this "memorized" book, children begin to match words to the story they know and become "initial" readers.

If you treat learning to read as a natural process, you'll help your child become a successful reader, one who enjoys reading.

AP BULLETIN

Playing Together
"The value of family playtime is inestimable. It allows parents and children to interact on a very personal level, to learn about human emotions and needs, and to cooperate in a mutually satisfying pastime. Playing together relieves families of one of the major stresses of our time.—Anthony D. Fredericks, reading specialist.

All Parents Bulletin

Bobbi Fisher teaches kindergarten at Haynes School, Sudbury, MA.

* For a third grader, this may not be true.

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APPENDIX E

HOME READING PROGRAM

Dear Family,

Here is another book to read together. I hope you all enjoy the book and send the note back to me so I will be able to share the event.

(Check where appropriate)

___ I read the book with my child.

___ My child got involved in reading it with me.

My child read the book to me by:

___ Retelling the story using the pictures.

___ Retelling the story by memorizing the words.

___ Reading the words in the story.

____ My child read the book to others in the family.

Comments:

A family member's signature_____

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APPENDIX E

HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME A BETTER READER

Before Reading

1. Read the title and author.
2. Look through all the pictures.
3. As the two of you look through the pictures, make guesses about what might happen in the story.

During Reading

1. Read the story.
2. Talk from time to time about the guesses you made and how they are the same or different from what is actually happening in the story.

After Reading

1. Discuss with your child favorite parts, sad parts, fun parts, or whatever might be appropriate to the story.

APPENDIX F
Primary Parent Survey

Primary Parent Survey

Child's Name_____Date_____

Parent's Name_____

Since you are your child's first and best teacher we would like your perceptions of your child as a learner in your home. Using the codes below, circle the number that best indicate your observations.

1 = Most of the time
2 =Sometime
3 =Rarely
4 =Never observed

1. My child likes to listen to family members read to him/her.

1 2 3 4

2. My child is read to every day.

1 2 3 4

3. My child likes to write.

1 2 3 4

4. My child has seen me read frequently.

1 2 3 4

5. My child likes to draw or color.

1 2 3 4

6. My child tries to read in everyday situations (signs, labels, etc.)

1 2 3 4

7. My child has books of his/her own and a place to keep them.

1 2 3 4

8. My child has seen me read for pleasure.

1 2 3 4

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APPENDIX F

9. My child likes to read to others.

1 2 3 4

10. There are books, magazines, and news papers in our home.

1 2 3 4

11. My child has a library carry and has a chance to use it regularly.

1 2 3 4

12. My child likes to talk about or share his/her writing.

1 2 3 4

13.Books are an important part of my child's belongings.

1 2 3 4

14.My child knows that I value reading as much as I do watching television.

1 2 3 4

15. My child plays with paper, pencils , and crayons.

1 2 3 4

16. My child is curious about things.

1 2 3 4

17. My child wonders about how things happen.

1 2 3 4

18. I like to read a book.

1 2 3 4

19. I would rather talk on the phone then write a letter.

1 2 3 4

APPENDIX F

20. I give my child time to express his thoughts through talking.

1 2 3 4

21. I give my child time to express his thought through play.

1 2 3 4

22. I have a library card and have a chance to use it regularly.

1 2 3 4

23. I read the newspaper everyday.

1 2 3 4

24.My child looks at the newspaper and often comments about a picture.

1 2 3 4

25.Our conversations go beyond daily functional conversation.

1 2 3 4

26. My child can carry on a conversation on the telephone with his friend, grandparent.etc..

1 2 3 4

27. I find it difficult to finding time to read.

1 2 3 4

28. I read for a given purpose.

1 2 3 4

29. Books are a necessary part of my day.

1 2 3 4

30.My child makes choices independently about using free time.

1 2 3 4

APPENDIX F

31.My child chooses activities that entertain him/her. (videos, Nintendo,etc.)

1 2 3 4

32. As a student in school I enjoy school.

1 2 3 4

33. My child has a favorite book that he/she wants read to him often.

1 2 3 4

34. My child pretends to read.

1 2 3 4

35. My child copies names and familiar words.

1 2 3 4

36. My child sometimes labels and adds "words" to pictures.

1 2 3 4

37. I write notes to my child.

1 2 3 4

APPENDIX G
Parent Checklist

PARENT CHECKLIST
How to Help a Child Learn to Read

___ 1. I read to my child every day.

___ 2. If my child asks for it, I'll read the same book repeatedly.

___ 3. When I read aloud, my child sits in my lap or very close beside me and is in a position to follow along in the book.

___ 4. My child has seen me read frequently.

___ 5. My child has seen a man and a woman read.

___ 6. My child has books of his/her own and a place to keep them.

___ 7. There are books, magazines, and newspapers in our home.

___ 8. Books and magazines are an important part of my gift-giving for each child.

___ 9. Our conversations go beyond daily functions like eating, dressing, and bathing. For example, we talk about what happens in our family and neighborhood, and why things are the way they are.

___ 10. I give my child opportunities to express her/himself through art, play, and talking.

___ 11. I am a concerned and interested listener, showing my child that his/her feelings and interests are important to me.

___ 12. My child knows that I value reading as much as I do watching television.

___ 13. I control the amount of time my child spends watching TV, and the types of programs.

___ 14. I provide many interesting and varied experiences for my child, such as visits to parades and fairs, restaurants, cities and towns of different sizes, concerts, church, beach, mountains, lakes, rivers, and nature walks.

___ 15. I provide plenty of paper, pencils, and crayons for a chalkboard for play activities.

___ 16. We play games that help my child to see differences and likenesses in objects in our home.

___ 17. My child has a library card and has a chance to use it regularly.

___ 18. I transmit a positive attitude toward schools and teachers.

___ 19. My child's hearing and vision are checked regularly.

___ 20. I am sure that my child receives a balanced diet.

APPENDIX H
Student Reading Attitude

Student Reading Attitude Survey

Name_____

I like to draw.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I like reading stories.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I enjoy reading notes and letters from other people.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I like reading at school.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I have trouble understanding what I read.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

It's fun to read at home.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I enjoy talking about what I read.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

Reading is fun.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I wish I had more time to read at school.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I think I'm a good reader.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I like to read.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

How often do you read at home?

_____never ____sometimes ____a lot

What do you like to read?

APPENDIX I
Student Writing Attitude

Student Writing Attitude Survey

Name_____

I like to draw.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I like writing stories.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I enjoy writing notes and letters to people.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I like writing at school.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I have trouble thinking about what to write.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

It's fun to write things at home.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I like to share my writing with others.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

Writing is fun.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I wish I had more time to write at school.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I think I'm a good writer.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

I like to write.

_____no ____sometimes ____yes

How often do you write at home?

_____never ____sometimes ____a lot

What do you like to write?

APPENDIX J

Familiarity with Reading/Writing

Child's Name

Teacher's Name

Familiarity with Reading and Writing

Key: N = never S = sometimes A = always

	Date	Date	Date
	____	____	____
Pretends to read			
Holds a book correctly			
Knows directional movements			
Front to back			
Left to right			
Top to bottom			
Knows book terms			
Cover			
Title			
Title page			
Author			
Illustrator			
Page numbers			
Listens to and responds to stories			
Draws pictures about story characters			
Uses pictures to tell a story			
Uses clues from book title and cover illustration to make predictions			

APPENDIX J

Key: N = never S = sometimes A = always

	Date	Date	Date
	____	____	____
Retells familiar stories			
retells own version			
retells almost none			
retells parts			
retells all important points			
partially memorized			
memorized			
partially reading print			
reads all print			
uses picture clues to retell			
Chooses favorite books and stories			
Recognizes that print carries meaning			
Recognizes concepts about print			
letter			
word			
sentence			
question			
capitalization			
end marks			

Knows letter/sound correspondence: (circle)

b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x y z a e i o u

Comments:

APPENDIX K
We Noticed

We Noticed...

Child's Name _____ Date_____

Title(s) of piece(s) of writing I chose:

_____

_____

What my teacher and I noticed I did well:

_____

_____

_____

_____

My goals for next time:

_____

_____

_____

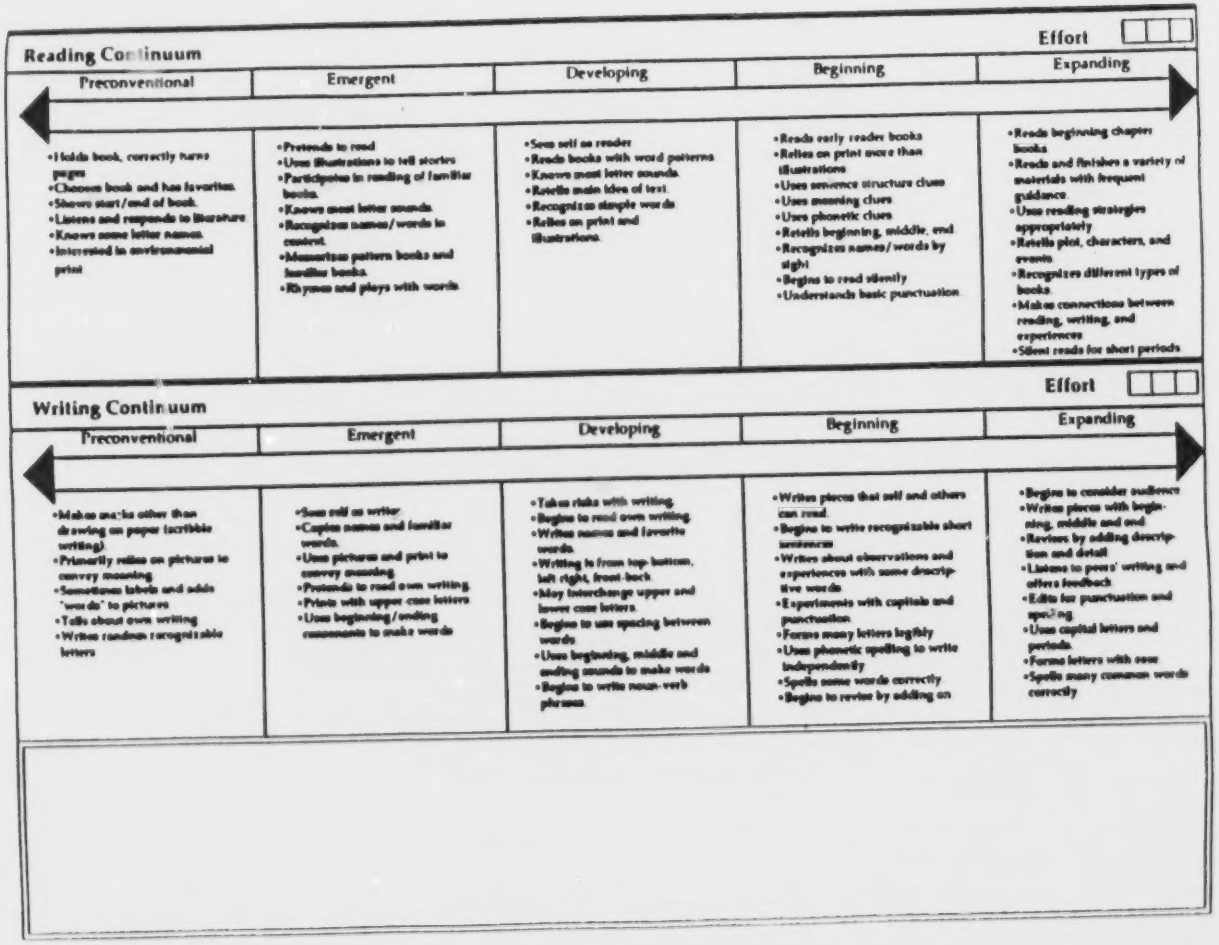
Parent(s) response to this writing:

_____

_____

_____

_____


Reading Continuum
Effort
Preconventional
Emergent
Developing
Beginning
Expanding
•Holds book, correctly turns pages
•Chooses book and has favorites
•Shows start/end of book
•Listens and responds to literature
•Knows some letter names
•Interested in environmental print
•Pretends to read
•Uses illustrations to tell stories
•Participates in reading of familiar books
•Knows most letter sounds
•Recognizes names/words in context
•Memorizes pattern books and familiar books
•Rhymes and plays with words
•Sees self as reader
•Reads books with word patterns
•Knows most letter sounds
•Retells main idea of text
•Recognizes simple words
•Relies on print and illustrations
•Reads early reader books
•Relies on print more than illustrations
•Uses sentence structure clues
•Uses meaning clues
•Uses phonetic clues
•Retells beginning, middle, end
•Recognizes names/words by sight
•Begins to read silently
•Understands basic punctuation
•Reads beginning chapter books
•Reads and finishes a variety of materials with frequent guidance
•Uses reading strategies appropriately
•Retells plot, characters, and events
•Recognizes different types of books
•Makes connections between reading, writing, and experiences
•Silent reads for short periods
Writing Continuum
Effort
Preconventional
Emergent
Developing
Beginning
Expanding
•Makes marks other than drawing on paper (scribble writing)
•Primarily relies on pictures to convey meaning
•Sometimes labels and adds "words" to pictures
•Talks about own writing
•Writes random recognizable letters
•Sees self as writer
•Copies names and familiar words
•Uses pictures and print to convey meaning
•Pretends to read own writing
•Prints with upper case letters
•Uses beginning/ending consonants to make words
•Takes risks with writing
•Begins to read own writing
•Writes names and favorite words
•Writing is from top-bottom, left-right, front-back
•May interchange upper and lower case letters
•Begins to use spacing between words
•Uses beginning, middle and ending sounds to make words
•Begins to write noun-verb phrases
•Writes pieces that self and others can read
•Begins to write recognizable short sentences
•Writes about observations and experiences with some descriptive words
•Experiments with capitals and punctuation
•Forms many letters legibly
•Uses phonetic spelling to write independently
•Spells some words correctly
•Begins to revise by adding on
•Begins to consider audience
•Writes pieces with beginning, middle and end
•Revises by adding description and detail
•Listens to peers' writing and offers feedback
•Edits for punctuation and spelling
•Uses capital letters and periods
•Forms letters with ease
•Spells many common words correctly

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Reading Continuum

Effort ☐☐☐

Expanding	Bridging	Fluent	Proficient	Independent
• Reads beginning chapter books • Reads and finishes a variety of materials with frequent guidance • Uses reading strategies appropriately • Retells plot, characters, and events • Recognizes different types of books • Makes connections between reading, writing, and experiences • Silent reads for short periods	• Reads medium level chapter books • Reads and finishes a variety of materials with guidance • Reads and understands most new words • Uses reference materials to locate information with guidance • Increases knowledge of literary elements and genres • Silent reads for extended periods	• Reads most young adult literature • Selects, reads and finishes a wide variety of materials • Uses reference materials independently • Understands literary elements and genres • Begins to interpret deeper meaning in young adult literature with frequent guidance • Participates in guided literary discussions	• Reads complex young adult literature • Moves between many genres with ease • Integrates non-fiction information to develop a deeper understanding • Interprets sophisticated meaning in young adult literature with guidance • Participates in complex literary discussions	• Voluntarily reads and understands a wide variety of complex and sophisticated materials with ease • Evaluates, interprets and analyzes literary elements critically

Writing Continuum

Effort ☐☐☐

Expanding	Bridging	Fluent	Proficient	Independent
• Begins to consider audience • Writes pieces with beginning, middle and end • Revises by adding description and detail • Listens to peers' writing and offers feedback • Edits for punctuation and spelling • Uses capital letters and periods • Forms letters with ease • Spells many common words correctly	• Begins to write for various purposes • Begins to organize ideas in logical sequence • Begins to develop paragraphs • Begins to revise by adding literary devices • Develops editing and proof reading skills • Employs strategies to spell difficult words correctly	• Uses appropriate tone and mood for a variety of purposes • Experiments with complex sentence structure • Connects paragraphs in logical sequence • Uses an increased repertoire of literary devices • Revises for clarity by adding reasons and examples • Includes deleting in revision strategies • Edits with greater precision (spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization)	• Adapts style for a wide range of purposes • Varies sentence complexity naturally • Uses literary devices effectively • Integrates information from a variety of sources to increase power of writing • Uses sophisticated descriptive language • Uses many revision strategies effectively	• Writes cohesive in depth pieces • Internalizes writing process • Analyzes and evaluates written material in depth • Perseverates through complex writing projects

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APPENDIX M

Zaner/Bloser Framework

LITERACY FRAMEWORK

STAGES AND COMPONENTS (Literacy Plus, Zaner-Bloser, Inc., 1992)

	Emerging Literacy	Developing Literacy	Independent Literacy
Listening	• listens rather generally • follows simple directions • is often inattentive or easily distracted • interrupts others and has difficulty waiting his or her turn to speak • finds it difficult to listen for extended periods of time • may or may not look at the speaker	• listens more actively • shows sensitivity to nonverbal communication • asks for repetition when meaning is unclear • listens for more specific information • can follow more complex directions • shows increased interest in what others are saying	• establishes own purpose for listening • actively listens • waits for others to speak • expects that what is heard will make sense • clears up confusion about what has been said by asking questions or clarifying information • uses listening as a tool for getting and receiving information
Speaking	• sometimes speaks too loudly or too softly • communicates with others about own activities but is easily distracted • may often create and experiment with words • may use incorrect grammar • needs someone to listen to him or her but does not consider the needs of the listener • may retain some baby talk • asks many fact-finding questions	• shows increased awareness as to how to use language • asks for clarification of what was said • uses language for different purpose • takes turns speaking • stays on topic • keeps from being too distracted • shows curiosity about words and what they mean	• takes turns speaking • speaks for a range of purposes • selects a variety of audience • communicates significant messages • maintains discussions with others with ease • speaks with acceptable grammar and tone • communicates clearly and effectively
Vocabulary	• recognizes that there are words s/he doesn't know • attaches meaning of new words to words he/she is familiar with • uses expanded vocabulary related to the classroom activities • may begin to use invented spellings for words when writing	• exhibits an expanding range of vocabulary from outside the classroom • points out new word in the environment • uses invented spellings when writing, mixed with some common words from memory • attempts to use new words when talking • is becoming aware of spelling patterns and how to use them • uses an expanded vocabulary to articulate ideas more clearly	• chooses to learn new words • uses context clues and word parts to figure out unknown words • asks about unknown words • verifies word meanings • understands that some words have multiple meanings • can spell some words phonetically but uses visual memory of spelling patterns for other words • has a large sight vocabulary of high-frequency words • can apply some spelling rules to new words • can create a mental picture of the meaning of a word
Writing	• displays an interest in print • recognizes that print contains messages • recognizes the difference between scribbling and drawing • uses pictures to communicate • can write some letters • may string letters together to represent a complete thought • can use some environmental print words in writing	• can write and name most letters using a mixture of upper and lower case • demonstrates original ideas • chooses own topics • is more aware of spacing between words • may copy words from various sources to use while writing • discusses writing with others • is becoming aware of literary elements such as voice and sense of audience • begins to uses some conventions of prints such as capital letters and punctuation	• writes frequently for a variety of purposes • uses logical beginning, middle, and end • obtains feedback from peers • rehearses before writing • uses knowledge of print conventions • makes some revisions • begins to edit own work • uses reference sources as an aid to writing • can give appropriate feedback on someone else's writing • shows an interest in publishing
Reading	• displays an interest in books • communicates with others about books • asks for rereading of favorite stories • joins in during familiar text • imitates or memory reads • uses pictures to derive meaning from text • recognizes some letters and sounds • can follow print from left to right • begins to predict what might happen next in the story • can retell the story	• begins to recognize that there are a variety of genres • reads to self for short periods of time • may set own purpose for reading • participates in a variety of response(s) to literature • identifies favorite authors and illustrators • uses background knowledge to enhance meaning • identifies the sequence of events	• chooses to read independently • uses experience to select what to read • samples a variety of genre • selects text based on own purpose for reading • predicts before reading and uses the text to confirm/disconfirm predictions • uses background knowledge • recognizes when text is confusing • frequently self-corrects while reading • summarizes for retelling • can respond and share feelings about text

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APPENDIX N
Diagnostic Spelling Test

Spelling Scale

0 points - (PrePhonetic)
string of random letters with inappropriate beginning letter - non readers

1 point - (Early Phonemic)
initial or final consonants only - usually can't read

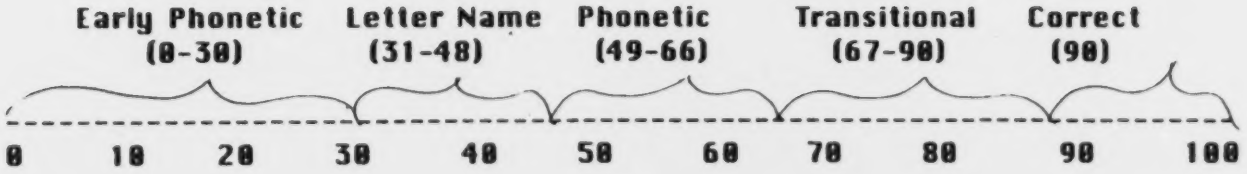
2 points - (Letter Name)
beginning and ending consonants appropriate -or- beginning and vowel with no ending consonant - not fluent readers

3 points - (Phonetic)
beginning and ending consonants plus appropriate or approximate vowel - developing readers

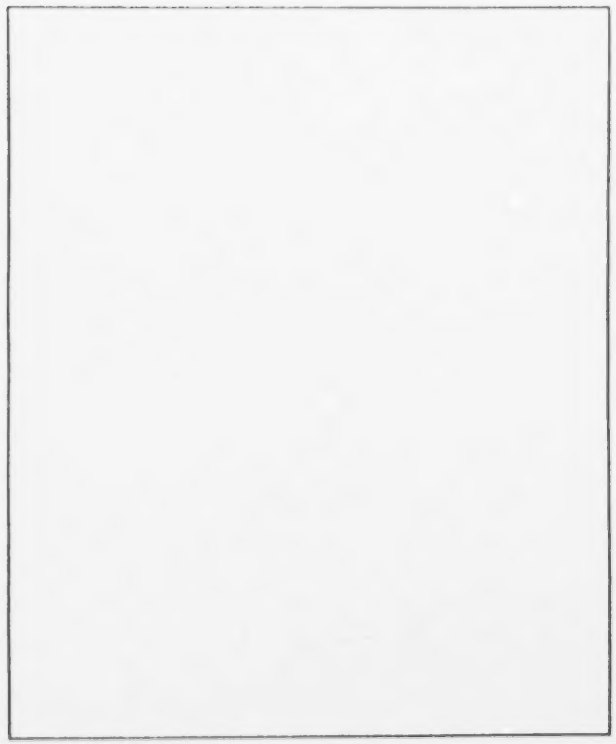
4 points - (Transitional)
beginning and ending consonants correct, short vowel correct, attempted long vowel, blends - beginning fluent readers

5 points - (Correct)

Word	1	2	3	4
back	b	bk/ba	bec/bec	bak
sink	s	sk/sc	sec/sek	senk/singk
mail	m	ml	mal/mel	malle/mael
picking	p	pn/pkn	pikn/pecn	piking/pikin
dress	d/j	js/ds	jras/dris	dres
lake	l	lc	lak	laek
rice	r	rs/rc	ris/ras	riac/rise
peeked	p	pt	peke/pekd	pekte/peekt
stamp	s	st	sap	samp/stap
light	l	lt	lit	lite/liet
seed	s	sd	sed/sid	sede/sead
dragon	d/j	dn/jn	dagin/jagn	dragin
bed	b	bd	bad	
gate	g	gt/ga	gat/get	gaet
stick	s	stk/sk/sc	sek	sdik/stic
test	t	tst	tes/tet	tast
side	s	sd	sid	siad
feet	f	ft	fet/fot	fete


Early Phonetic
(0-30)
Letter Name
(31-48)
Phonetic
(49-66)
Transitional
(67-90)
Correct
(90)
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

Fall Self-Portrait



Name: _____ Date: _____

Spring Self-Portrait

Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX P
Present Parent Survey

This study is being conducted by Terilyn Turner, Joanne Mulvihill, and Mary Kay Dunne, students in the Field-Based Masters Program at St. Xavier's University. The purpose of the study is to improve reading and writing process in first and second grade. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you decide to participate, the information you provide will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached survey.

March 1996

Dear Parents,

We are interested in your ideas and opinions about evaluating your child's progress in reading and writing in first grade. Please take a minute to respond to these questions and return in the enclosed envelope.

1. Do you feel the information about your child's reading progress from the first grade teacher was:

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

2. Did the report card help you see your child's growth in reading during the year?

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

3. What information do you feel was the most helpful for you to assess your child's reading progress?

APPENDIX P

4. Do you feel the information about your child's writing progress from the first grade teacher was:

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

5. Did the report card help you see your child's growth in writing during the year?

_____Too little _____Just right _____ Too much

6. What information do you feel was the most helpful for you to assess your child's writing progress?

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questionnaire. Your input is greatly appreciated. Please return by March 8th in the enclosed envelope.

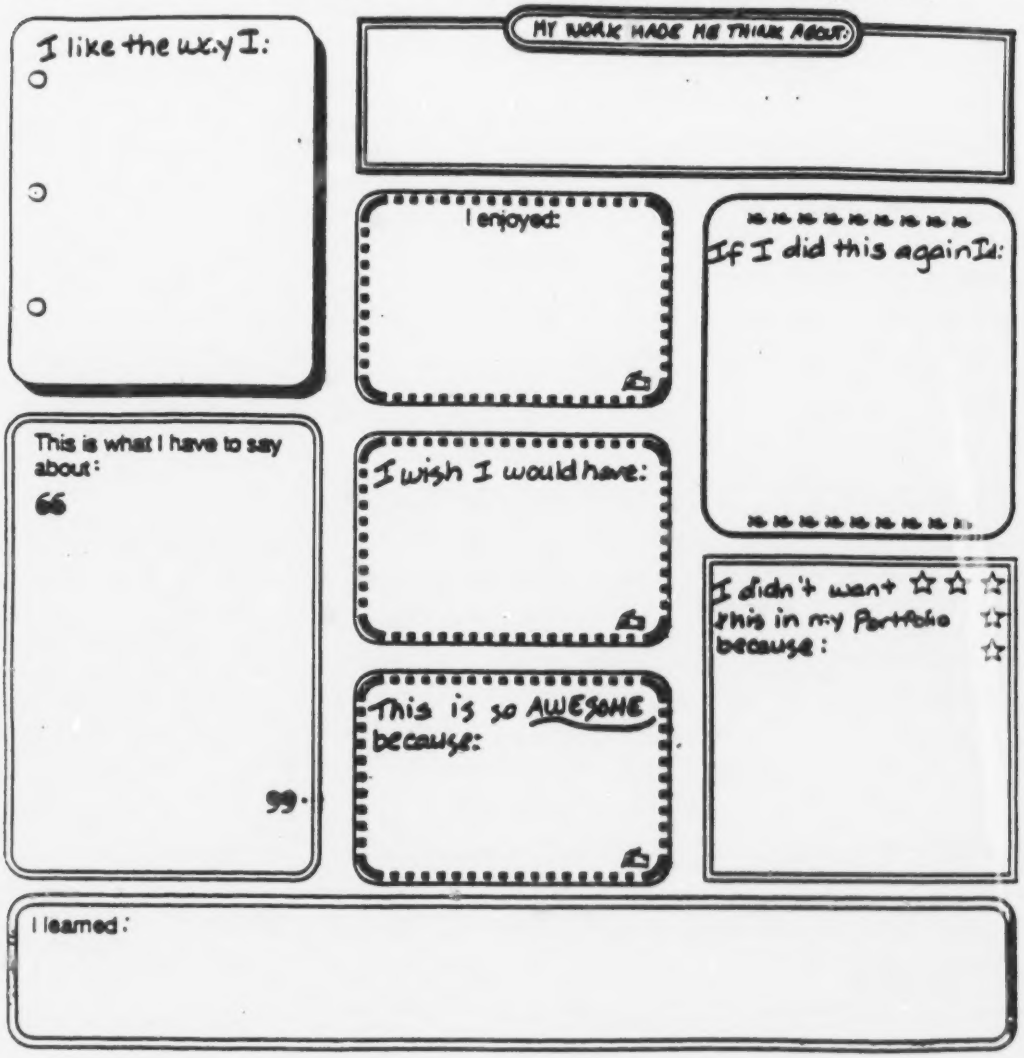
Professionally Yours,

Mrs. Mary Kay Dunne

APPENDIX Q
Portfolio Tags

Portfolio Tags

Ask your friends, teacher, parents and classmates to give you positive feedback on your work.


I like the way I:
MY WORK MADE ME THINK ABOUT:
I enjoyed:
If I did this again I:
This is what I have to say about:
I wish I would have:
I didn't want this in my Portfolio because:
This is so AWESOME because:
I learned:

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WOW!!
I liked doing this story the best.

This was hard for me.

My Best Work

I didn't like this

My favorite

I could do better on this story.

APPENDIX R

Organizational Checklist

1	**Organizational Checklist**									
2										
3	**Articles to be collected**	August	Sept.	October	November	January	February	March	May	
4										
5	Former Parent Survey	x								
6	Teacher Survey	x								
7	**Parent Portfolio Letter**		x							
8	Parent Ed. Packet		x							
9	Primary Parent Survey R/W		x							
10	Familiarity w/Reading and Writing		x							
11	Student Reading Attitude Survey		x							
12	Student Writing Attitude Survey		x							
13	We Noticed		x							
14	Fall Self-Portrait		x							
15	Spring Self-Portrait									
16	Literacy Framework		x							
17	Spelling Stages		x							
18	Emergent Writing		x							
19										
20	**Portfolio contents**									
21										
22	Emergent Writing		x	x	x	x				
23	Familiarity w/Reading and Writing		x	x	x	x				
24	Student Reading Attitude Survey		x						x	
25	Student Writing Attitude Survey		x						x	
26	We Noticed		x	x	x	x	x		x	
27	Fall Self-Portrait		x							
28	Spring Self-Portrait								x	
29	Literacy Framework		x	x	x	x	x		x	
30	Spelling Stages Test			x			x		x	
31	Writing Samples		x	x	x	x	x		x	
32	Reading Samples (taped readings)		x	x	x	x	x		x	
33	Wrtng Samples w/ Fix it Strategy				x		x		x	
34	Student Self-reflection/tag-its		x	x	x	x	x		x	
35										
36										
37										

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APPENDIX S
Emergent Writing

Child's Name

Teacher's Name

Emergent Writing

Check all that apply	Date	Date	Date
WRITING STAGES			
Scribbles and pretends to be writing			
Uses letters and/or pictures to tell or to retell a story			
Embellishes familiar stories with new events or characters			
Uses one-letter spelling			
Writes with invented spelling			
Listens and responds to stories			
Uses conventional spelling most of the time			
beginning and final consonants			
medial consonants			
short vowels			
long vowel patterns			
Writes with transitional spelling			

Emergent Writing

Check all that apply	Date	Date	Date
PRINT CONVENTIONS			
Uses appropriate spacing between words and/or sentences			
Uses capitalization appropriately			
beginning of sentence			
proper nouns			
Uses end marks (period, question mark)			
WRITER'S CRAFT			
Writes for an audience			
Writes for a purpose			
Revises own written work			
changes or adds to a picture			
changes pictures and /or words to explain or embellish			

Comments:

APPENDIX T
Taped Reading

_____ TAPED READING of _____ by _____
(Date) (Title) (Name)

Why did you choose this book to read and have taped?

_____

_____

_____

How does this show your growth as a reader?

_____

_____

_____

What is your goal for reading?

_____

_____

APPENDIX U
We Noticed Letter

October 19, 1995

Dear Parents,

Tonight your child is bringing home a 'We Noticed" paper. This is an important step in the writing process. We will try to do this type of evaluation every 6 weeks. It will hopefully be done again before conferences.

This is the process we used in class:

1) During the month of September , we had Writing Workshop, at least once a week, usually twice a week. Most topics are self - selected though I do have topics that tie in with a unit.

2) At the beginning of October, each child was asked to select a story that they thought was their best work.

3) I met individually with each child (conferencing) and talked about why they picked that story. What did they think they did especially well? At this time, I stated a goal for them to work on. The goal goes along with what we have worked on in Writing Workshop. By the second half of the year I expect most children to complete this on there own before we conference.

Here is what needs to be completed at home.

1) Have your child 'read' their story to you. Let them tell you about the picture.

2) Praise your child. They have done a wonderful job during Writing Workshop.

3) Read to your child the 'We Noticed " paper.

4) Talk about the goal(s) that are listed.

5) Write what you noticed. Be sure to tell your child what you

are writing!

6) RETURN TOMORROW. We will need to put these special stories back into our binders. We will be able to look at them throughout the year and see the progress that has been made.

As you can tell, this is a very important process in first grade. It is new to the children. In a sense, it is new to me also. I am still getting to know the children. It allows me to see where they are and where they are going. I find it very helpful to spend time with each and every child. It helps me understand how a child feels about himself and his/her writing.

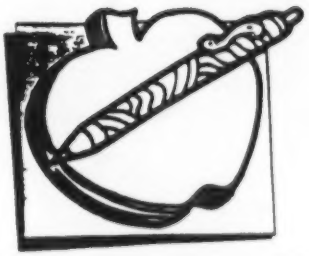
I hope that you enjoy this assignment with your child.

Kindly,

Mrs. M.F. [illegible]

APPENDIX V
Conference Record Form

Conference Record Form



Student's Name _____

Parents' Names _____

Grade _____ Conference Date _____

Level/Comments

- Reading _____
- Math _____
- Written Language _____
- Science _____
- Social Studies _____
- Social Behavior/Work Habits _____

Short-term Goals

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Notes From Observations or Cumulative Record

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Actions/Suggestions

Home _____

_____

_____

School _____

_____

_____

Follow-up Date: _____

APPENDIX W
Portfolio Survey

Parent Portfolio Survey

Name_____ Date_____

1. What do you feel your child's strengths were?_____
_____
_____
_____

2.Where do you feel that your child made the most growth? _____
_____
_____

3.What areas could your child do better in?
_____
_____
_____

4. How could you help your child at home?
_____
_____
_____

5.How did you feel about the use of a portfolio?_____ _____
_____

Former Parent Survey 6/95

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2						
3	Question 1	Too little	Just right	Too much		
4	School A	27	64	9		
5	School B	13	87	0		
6	School C	35	57	7		
7						
8						
9	Question 2	Too little	Just right	Too much		
10	School A	45	55	0		
11	School B	7	86	7		
12	School C	35	57	7		
13						
14						
15	Question 3	Too little	Just right	Too much		
16	School A	36	64	0		
17	School B	40	60	0		
18	School C	43	57	0		
19						
20						
21	Question 4	Too little	Just right	Too much		
22	School A	45	55	0		
23	School B	40	60	0		
24	School C	43	57	0		

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APPENDIX Y
Spreadsheet for Teacher Survey

Teacher Survey

	A	B	C
1			
2			
3			
4			
5	Change in methods of instruction	Yes	No
6	School A	100	0
7	School B	100	0
8	School C	95	5
9			
10			
11	Change in methods of assessment	Yes	No
12	School A	50	50
13	School B	95	5
14	School C	81	19
15			
16			
17	Course in assessment	Yes	No
18	School A	0	100
19	School B	85	15
20	School C	37	63
21			
22			
23	Conflict of methods vs. evaluation	Yes	No
24	School A	50	50
25	School B	85	15
26	School C	63	37

APPENDIX Z
Spreadsheet for Reading/Writing

Reading/Writing Continuum Comparison

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1								
2								
3	Reading	Precon.	Emergent	Developing	Beginning	Expanding	Bridging	
4	School A	60	28	4	8			
5	School B	32	21	37	10			
6	School C			27	36	23	14	
7								
8								
9								
10	Writing	Preconventional	Emergent	Developing	Beginning	Expanding	Bridging	
11	School A	68	20	4	8			
12	School B	16	37	37	10			
13	School C			5	55	40		
14								
15								
16			Precon.	Emergent	Developing	Beginning	Expanding	Bridging
17	School A	Reading	60	28	4	8		
18		Writing	68	20	4	8		
19								
20	School B		Precon.	Emergent	Developing	Beginning	Expanding	Bridging
21		Reading	32	21	37	10		
22		Writing	16	37	37	10		
23								
24	School C		Precon.	Emergent	Developing	Beginning	Expanding	Bridging
25		Reading			27	36	23	14
26		Writing			5	55	40	

APPENDIX AA
Spreadsheet Parent Survey 3/96

Parent Survey 3/96

	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3	Question 1	Too little	Just right	Too much
4	School A		100	
5	School B		100	
6	School C	14	86	
7				
8				
9	Question 2	Too little	Just right	Too much
10	School A	8	92	
11	School B	17	83	
12	School C	57	43	
13				
14				
15	Question 4	Too little	Just right	Too much
16	School A		100	
17	School B		100	
18	School C		100	
19				
20				
21	Question 5	Too little	Just right	Too much
22	School A	8	92	
23	School B	25	75	
24	School C	43	57	

APPENDIX BB
Spreadsheet Spelling Stages

School A, B, C - Spelling Stages

A	B	C	D	E	F
School A					
	Prephonetic 1	Prephonetic 2	Phonetic	Transitional	Correct
October '95	64	8	24	4	
February '96	16	12	36	28	8
School B					
	Prephonetic1	Prephonetic 2	Phonetic	Transitional	Correct
October '95	84	10			
February ''96		5	21	53	10
School C					
	Prephonetic 1	Prephonetic 2	Phonetic	Transitional	Correct
October '95	0	0	5	63	32
February '96	0	0	0	14	86

APPENDIX CC

Spreadsheet Reading/Writing 3/96

March Reading/Writing Comparisons

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
School A		Precon	Emergent	Developing	Beginning			
	Reading	24	28	24	24			
	Writing	20	40	20	20			
School B		Preconv.	Emergent	Developing	Beginning	Expanding	Bridging	
	Reading			31	53	16		
	Writing			37	42	16	5	
School C		PRE CON.	EMER.	DEV.	BEG.	EXP.	BRIDGE.	FLUENT
	Reading	0	0	0	23	32	27	18
	Writing	0	0	0	23	27	41	9

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